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THE LETTERS OF MADAME

VOL. II

1709—1722

"Rich in amusing stories, quaint reflections, interesting scraps of more or less secret history. And they have been prepared by Mrs. Scott Stevenson for the English reader quite admirably."

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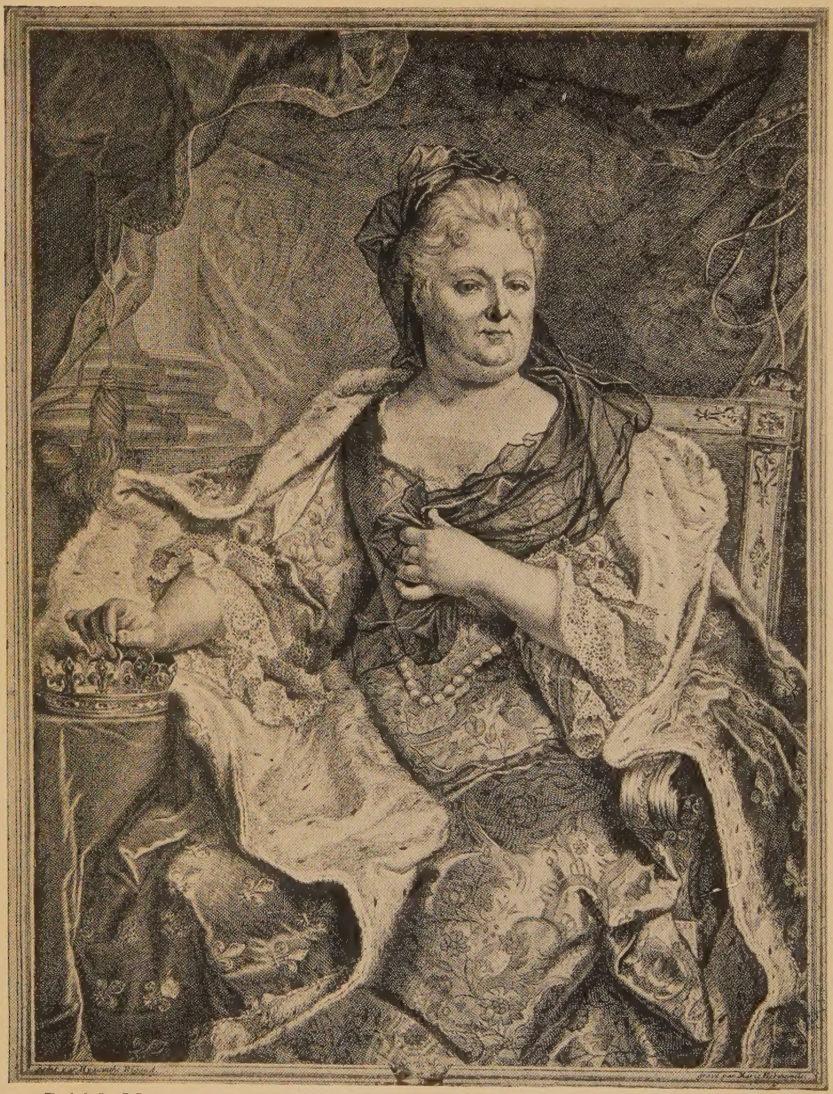
THE LETTERS OF MADAME



British Museum.] [*After Rigaud.*

ELIZABETH CHARLOTTE,
PRINCESS PALATINE, DUCHESS OF ORLEANS,
called Madame.

THE

LETTERS OF MADAME

The correspondence of Elizabeth-Charlotte of Bavaria, Princess Palatine, Duchess of Orleans, called "Madame" at the Court of King Louis XIV

VOLUME I: 1661-1708

Translated and Edited by

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INTRODUCTION

I.

Successive historians and other authors have found that it is impossible to write on the times of King Louis XIV of France —the *Grand Siècle*—without frequent and extensive reference to the voluminous correspondence of Elizabeth-Charlotte, best known by the title of "Madame"—Princess Palatine and Duchess of Orleans, wife of King Louis's only brother, Philippe, Duke of Orleans, and mother of the famous Regent, Philippe of Orleans.

It is somewhat remarkable, therefore, that while among the innumerable books on this fascinating period of history there are not a few biographies and memoirs dealing more or less adequately with Madame herself, yet no attempt has ever been made to present her letters to English readers in a manner suitable to their historical importance. Even in France, no effort has been made to supplement the collection of Ernest Jaegle, published in 1880.

In spite of this neglect, the *Correspondance de Madame* has remained a great quarrying ground for historians of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, while biographers seeking personal anecdotes and descriptions, novelists in quest of picturesque local colour, students of manners collecting details of etiquette and customs of the times, have all found ample reward for their searches through the various volumes and collections that contain the available letters of Madame.

The student of history who reads these letters will recognise the great debt that historians owe to this very interesting, original and human princess, who sat daily in her little cabinet aloof from the artificial life of the Court of King Louis, and wrote to her friends all over Europe, with a clear and unbiased vision, intimate letters of everything that was happening around her. Her letters are all the more valuable in that, unlike the

correspondence of some of her contemporaries, it was never intended by their author that they should be made public. Many of her descriptions of contemporary events have passed into the current coin of history, so that one recognises them as familiar without having known their origin.

The further debt of posterity will be apparent when it is realised that Madame de Saint-Simon early insinuated herself into Madame's good graces, and, as a lady-in-waiting, remained in her service and intimacy; since Madame was kept supplied with the very latest Court news by her sycophants, the lady-in-waiting was able to take home little items of news and of gossip to enrich the memoirs which her husband was then diligently compiling. Madame de Sevigné also tells us in her famous letters that on becoming a country neighbour of the Princess de Tarente, who was the aunt and an intimate correspondent of Madame, she eagerly sought to become intimate with her, and succeeded so well that the Princess used to read to her the letters she received from her niece, even translating them from the German in which they were written. According to Madame de Sevigné's own account, the information thus gained was passed on in her letters to amuse her daughter, Madame de Grignan, and thus preserved for future generations.

Cardinal Dubois, in his memoirs, gives a vivid picture of Madame applying herself to the business of letter-writing; he visited her in company with his friend Raslin, who was the Duc de Chartres's chief tutor.

"Madame," he says, "received us after Mass. We found her in her cabinet in full ceremonial attire, seated before a table laden with papers, at which she was busy writing. . . . She did not get up when we came in, but continued to write with an activity which amazed me. 'Monsieur Raslin,' she said in her Palatinate accent, and without putting down her pen, 'to-day being Thursday, I am writing to my aunt, the dear Electress of Hanover. So far I have only written a dozen sheets, and there is so much news that I expect I shall fill quite thirty.' I learnt later that Madame used to dedicate each day of the week to a particular correspondent. On Sunday she used to write to Lorraine and Hanover; on Monday to Savoy and Spain; on Tuesday to Prussia; on Wednesday to Modena; on Thursday to Hanover again; on Friday to Lorraine again; and on Saturday she made up any arrears for the week. I have heard her say: 'When in a single day I have written twenty sheets to

the Princess of Wales, ten or twelve to my daughter and twenty to the Queen of Sicily, I am a little tired.' . . . When one considers that this business of letter-writing with all the Courts of Europe went on for more than forty years, one is appalled."

Further on in the account of the same interview Dubois gives some more sidelights on Madame's method of collecting the news necessary to the maintenance of such an extensive correspondence.

"'I am glad you came,' said Madame, looking me up and down, 'I was just writing about you, and I am going to sketch your portrait from nature.' I posed as well as I could, while the Princess asked me all sorts of questions, not omitting to put down in writing the gist of my replies. I was beginning to think that I must be someone of importance, because at that time I did not know that everything had its place in this universal correspondence. 'Monsieur Dubois,' she said to me gravely when she had finished her description of my person, 'they tell me that you receive fifteen hundred livres from your appointments. Would you like me to add another five hundred out of my own pocket?' 'Madame,' I cried with a joyful expression which was not at all feigned, 'what have I done to deserve this?' 'Nothing yet,' she answered, 'you must earn the money. . . . I am often short of news about my son, the Duc de Chartres, and he must be mentioned in all my letters. That is a gap that must be filled, and I rely upon you to attend to it. . . . I beg of you, therefore, to keep a journal of my son's studies and all that he says. Let me have it week by week, and the five hundred livres will soon be doubled if I am satisfied with your news.' . . . An enormous budget of news was brought to the Princess, by which I perceived that I was not the only one employed in satisfying Madame's curiosity. . . . I have learnt since that the Marquis de Dangeau and the Duc de Saint-Simon played a part in this mild system of spying, one department of which was in my charge."

II.

The Princess Elizabeth-Charlotte was born in 1652 in Heidelberg Castle, in a home that was already grievously troubled by domestic strife, from which no attempt was apparently made to shelter the Princess and her brother Charles. Her father,

Charles-Louis, the Elector Palatine of Bavaria, married Charlotte, hereditary Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel. She was a proud, solitary and sombre woman, who neither held her husband's affections nor would submit to share them with the comely and cheerful Louise Von Degenfeld, who ruled the Elector's heart and household. Many bitter and humiliating scenes led eventually to her being divorced in 1657. Elizabeth-Charlotte, then only five years old, was sent to Hanover to be brought up by her aunt, the Duchess Sophia of Hanover. With her Elizabeth-Charlotte spent the happiest years of her life, and her love and admiration never wavered up to the death of her aunt in 1714.

During a visit to Amsterdam she played with the young Prince William of Orange-Nassau, who afterwards was to ascend the throne of England as William III. When she was twelve years old she returned to Heidelberg. In the meantime the Elector had married morganatically Louise Von Degenfeld, and their marriage turned out a very happy one. Elizabeth-Charlotte seems to have settled down quite comfortably in the new order of affairs and became very fond of her step-mother and step-brothers and sisters, of whom in time there were eight, three sisters and five brothers. The Emperor revived the old title of Raugrave for them; the two elder sisters were the Raugravine Louisa and the Raugravine Amelia-Elizabeth, with whom Madame afterwards corresponded most regularly; they both remained unmarried, but the youngest sister, Caroline, married the son of the Duke of Schomberg, and went to England. No letters from Madame to her have been discovered, although probably she corresponded with her after the Treaty of Ryswick in 1697, for we find that at the time of Caroline's death, Madame owed her money for stockings and pins which the Duchess had obtained for her in England.

Under the Elector Charles-Louis the Palatinate, which had been devastated during the Thirty Years' War, was beginning to recover its prosperity and importance, and when, in 1670, proposals of marriage came from France on behalf of the King's only brother, Philippe of France, Duke of Orleans, neither the father nor the daughter seem to have had any hesitation in accepting them. The Duke of Orleans—" Monsieur " as he was called at Court—was at this time thirty-one years old and of very handsome though effeminate appearance. Inordinately fond of all pomps and ceremonies, he was the leader of the social life at Versailles, but he had no voice in the affairs of State.

He had, however, shown a great aptitude for military leadership, until Louis, perceiving this, kept him at home, in case he might acquire too much power. His first marriage with Henriette-Anne of England had not been a happy one, and he was even suspected by many of complicity with his favourites in poisoning her. It is generally considered, nowadays, that she died as the result of a ruptured gastric ulcer, and in spite of the Duke's careless behaviour at the time, Louis and most of the Court believed him to be innocent. These favourites all retained their places with undiminished power in Monsieur's household when he remarried, although jealousy drove Mademoiselle de Grancey, the Duke's mistress, to absent herself for a week after the wedding. She returned, however, and the Chevalier de Lorraine, often described as the blackest villain of the century, together with Henrietta's Scottish lady-in-waiting, Madame Gordon, and the Marquis d'Effiat, prepared to wage war on the second Madame as they had done on the first one.

The wedding took place by proxy at Metz, after the nineteen-year-old Princess had solemnly read her abjuration of her Protestant faith before the Bishop and a large assembly of nobles. Probably this abjuration did not cost her many pangs, for the Palatinate under her father's rule was a country of religious toleration, where Calvinists and Lutherans lived at peace with their Roman Catholic neighbours, and where even obscure sects such as the Photinians found a refuge. Although after her marriage she punctiliously observed the outward form of her new religion, there is abundant evidence in her letters that she never experienced any great change of heart.

Little is to be found in contemporary letters about the new Duchess of Orleans during the early years of her life at the French Court. Doubtless others besides Madame de Fiennes discovered the uncompromising directness of the new Duchess's speech and her fearlessness of the enemies who had robbed her predecessor, if not actually of her life, at any rate of her happiness and her good name.

Madame had never been allowed by her father, the Elector Palatine, to learn to ride, in case she should some day marry a husband who did not care for hunting, but hunting had been a passion with her eccentric mother and the young princess inherited her love for the sport, or perhaps rather for the outdoor life and vigorous exercise it entailed. She is soon found, therefore, accompanying the King and the Dauphin to the chase

several days a week. No inclemency of weather deterred her, and she continued to hunt until an age long past that at which most ladies of the time had given up all energetic pursuits, and even then she continued to follow the hunt in a carriage. She loved the open air, and when possible kept her windows wide open—a proceeding which appeared to mean madness to her contemporaries. Madame de Maintenon, for example, rarely emerged from a chair specially constructed to shield her from whatever draughts were to be found in a room of which the windows were kept tightly shut, day and night, while another lady of the Court went so far as never to appear out of doors without a mask to protect her from the effects of the open air.

The chief amusement of the Court was gambling, but Madame had no taste for cards and seldom played if she could avoid it. She preferred rather to write her letters, read, amuse herself with her dogs, of which she was very fond and always had a great number, or arrange her medals. Her collection of medals was a very full and valuable one, part of which at least is still to be seen at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris.

She was allowed no voice in the choice of the tutors of her family or the members of their suites, and she could look on only from a distance at their education and training. Her daughter was by nature virtuous, sensible and modest, and gave her no trouble, but the Regent showed at an early age signs of the moral decay which was to be so apparent in his later life, and the choice made for him of the people around him left his mother little hope for his future moral character. She continued to do her utmost to reform him, and when at last she was forced to give up the attempt she continued to watch over him tenderly with a solicitude that renders the accusation absurd and unmerited that she neglected his welfare, and that of his sister, in order to devote all her time to letter-writing.

In the year 1683 Louis XIV's Queen, Marie-Thérèse, died, and Madame became the first lady in France. She now had to take her place more regularly at all Court functions, and her letters of this period treat more frequently of Court affairs. At the same time Madame de Maintenon was becoming more and more necessary to the King and more and more powerful, and Madame often had to meet her. The antagonism of the two woman tinged Madame's life with additional bitterness, until the King's death in 1715, when Madame de Maintenon disappeared for ever from the Court. So greatly did the Princess

detest the King's unacknowledged but all-powerful wife, that she habitually referred to her in her letters by such terms as *die alte Zote*—the old whore. Many of these letters were intercepted and their contents were made known to Madame de Maintenon, who believed in being on friendly terms with all the ministers of the Crown, and so the hatred between the two women was rendered more intense.

Madame seems to have lived happily enough with her husband until after the birth of her daughter, Mademoiselle de Chartres—called "Mademoiselle" after the marriage of both her step-sisters—and then Madame and Monsieur agreed amicably to terminate their connubial life together. Madame had early let the "Cabal," as she called Monsieur's group of favourites in his household, know that she was well aware of their attitude towards the former Madame, Henrietta, and of the part they were supposed to have played in her death. They realised that she was more difficult to overcome than the English Princess had been, and although they attempted on many occasions to weaken the King and Monsieur's good opinion of her, they never succeeded with the King and succeeded only partially with Monsieur.

Louis XIV preserved his respect and regard for Madame throughout his life. It is even said that he would have liked her to consent to be Regent along with her son, a post for which Madame had no liking. On his death-bed he assured her once again of the affection he had always had for her. In his dealings with her, as shown in her letters, a degree of kindliness and consistent fair-mindedness transpires which is not usually associated with the traditional figure of the *Roi Soleil*. The Louis shown by Madame is almost paternal in his dealings with the members of his Court. He is a very human figure, a devoted father, often harassed by the shortcomings of his numerous family and afflicted by their troubles and illnesses. We can see him renewing his youth with his grandson's child-wife, the little Duchess of Burgundy, even to the extent of joining in her childish frolics. In the letters we can watch his majestic demeanour as he walks amongst his courtiers, and his exquisite dignity and restraint at some splendid moment when even his jaded soul must have thrilled, as when, in November, 1700, he led his young grandson into the drawing-room where the whole Court was gathered and said: "Gentlemen, this is the King of Spain. Salute him!"

Then came the desolate emptiness of Louis's later years: France ruined, his coffers empty, hatred and religious dissensions everywhere, his family dying one after the other—first the Dauphiness, then the Dauphin, the young and charming Duke and Duchess of Burgundy within a week of each other, and lastly the cheerful young Duke of Berry. The old King saw all his descendants die, with the exception of a frail and mournful little boy, his great-grandson, who, in 1715, followed him upon the throne.

Madame died, apparently of dropsy, in 1722, only a year before her son, the Regent.

III.

In the midst of the brilliant Court of the *Roi Soleil* the figure of the King's sister-in-law stands out with great distinctness and colour. She was ugly, or at least plain, and cared nothing for the adornment of her person with fine clothes nor for the repair of Nature's deficiencies with rouge and powder, in the midst of a society to which beauty was the passport. Her intelligence was keen and her mind capable of grappling with, if not wholly understanding, the philosophical and religious problems of the day; Leibnitz, indeed, was pleased to be able to correspond with her. Her nature was utterly sincere and frank, and her speech was direct to bluntness, among a people and a Court where deceit and lying, sycophancy, affectation and servility were the order of the day. She lived such an upright life that scandal was never able to attach itself seriously to her name, and she remained a faithful wife—even to an unfaithful husband—and a devoted mother, although surrounded by debauchery of every description and a general disregard of all family ties and obligations. Saint-Simon, who had more opportunity of summing up her character than any other chronicler of the times, says of her: "She was strong, courageous and German to the last drop of her blood. Frank, honest, kind-hearted and amiable. . . . Jealous, even to pettiness, of what she considered due to her. With the figure and boorishness of a Swiss, she was, however, still capable of a true and unchanging friendship." Madame herself says: "I am very frank and human, and always say whatever is in my mind." Nor did she make any disguise of her feelings for her native country. After

the defeat of the French at Consarbrück by her uncles and cousins, she writes to her aunt saying that she jumped for joy at the news—which could not have increased her popularity at the time among the defeated French. Years, however, brought her a greater measure of discretion, and she became almost entirely French in her sympathies. During France's period of depression and disaster at the end of the seventeenth century her thoughts were always with the King's armies, and her letters then are as patriotic as those of any born Frenchwoman.

Madame is her own most severe critic of her personal appearance, and describes herself as devoid of any pretence to good looks. A glance at any portrait of her will show no monstrosity, but a pleasant-looking, though plain and stout, little woman.

Madame hated mésalliances beyond almost everything, and for her only son to be forced to marry the bastard even of a King was more than she could endure with equanimity. The story of the Regent's betrothal is fully told in her letters, and Saint-Simon supplements it with his account of how Madame so far forgot herself as to box her son's ears before the whole Court, when he first approached her after the betrothal. In this case all Madame's worst fears for her son were realised, and although he remained attached to his wife, she never had any love or respect for him, nor the smallest shred of loyalty. During the King's lifetime she spied upon her husband for Madame de Maintenon, and after Louis's death she plotted with her brothers and sisters to place the Duke of Maine on the throne and keep the Duke of Orleans out of the Regency. She took no interest whatever in her seven children, of whom all but one were daughters.

Shortly after the Regency was declared, Madame wrote to her sister, the Raugravine: "I am determined to have nothing to do with politics at all, because France, to her sorrow, has been governed by too many women already, and I do not wish it to be thought that my son is ruled by his mother. I hope he will profit by my example and not allow himself to be influenced by any woman." So she proceeded to live the life of a private individual in her rooms at Versailles and Paris, writing more letters than ever, playing with her pets, for she was always passionately fond of animals—in direct contrast with Madame de Maintenon, who disliked them thoroughly—and adding more medals to her collection. When she occasionally appeared at Court she was treated with respect because of her sarcastic

tongue, but she was felt to be somewhat out of place among the continuous orgy of dissipation which was the chief characteristic of life at the Regent's Court.

She adhered rigidly to her principle of taking no part in politics. If Elizabeth-Charlotte of Bavaria, with her quick intellect, virile outlook on life and multitudinous connections in almost every Court in Europe, had had a corresponding amount of ambition and intrigue in her nature, she might have played an important part in French history and European diplomacy. As it was, her nature was passive and singularly devoid of ambition. So long as she was allowed the honours due to the station to which she had been born (and on this point she was adamant) she cared nothing for power, and never sought to wield any influence in affairs of State. The pent-up energy of her nature, which could find no sufficient outlet in the life of a Princess at the Court of Louis XIV, drove her early to seek a refuge in letter-writing, which became her greatest pleasure and solace.

Some writers have exaggerated the amount of time which Madame spent upon her correspondence. In the last few years of her life, when she had not much else to engross her time, she doubtless spent a great part of each day at her writing-table; but during her married life and up to the King's death it is amply evident from the letters themselves that she led a life full of varied activities and interests.

IV.

Madame's chief correspondents were her aunt, the Electress Sophia of Hanover, her two half-sisters, the Raugravines Louisa and Amelia-Elizabeth, her two step-daughters, the Queens of Spain and Sicily, her own daughter, the Duchess of Lorraine, and later on, Caroline, Princess of Wales. Besides these regular correspondents, however, she kept up a desultory correspondence with many others, including her two half-brothers, Charles-Louis and Charles-Maurice, her old governess, Madame de Harling, Charlotte-Felicité, Duchess of Modena, who was the daughter of a brother of her uncle, the Elector of Hanover, her cousin Sophie-Charlotte, Queen of Prussia, the Duke of Brunswick, her trusted adviser the Abbé de Polier, and her son's tutor, the Abbé, afterwards Cardinal, Dubois.

A great many of these letters have been destroyed or still lie buried in the archives of Spain, Sicily, Prussia and Italy, but those to which access has been obtained amount to formidable proportions, and the letters to the Raugraves alone contain nearly half a million words. Although it was at first intended in this edition to make a complete collection of the letters, it was found impossible and, indeed, unnecessary to do so, as much space would have been wasted on mere exchanges of courtesies, polite enquiries and discourses about the weather, while Madame's habit of writing the same news to several of her correspondents, often on the same day, would have meant much unprofitable tautology. We have, therefore, endeavoured in this collection to omit all repetitions and mere politenesses in order to be able to include everything of real interest and importance, and especially everything bearing upon relations between England and France at the period. With the help of the bibliography that is appended it should be easy for any interested student to trace every letter of Madame's which is accessible up to the present day.

The German in which Madame wrote is virile and pure, except for an occasional provincialism of the Palatinate. She wrote her native language well, and the compliments of her correspondents upon her style were well deserved. Her letters corroborate what Saint-Simon says of her *naturel eloquence, justesse d'expressions, singularité dans le choix des termes.*

With regard to previous collections, the earliest letters to be made public were those addressed to the Duke Antoine-Ulric of Brunswick, and Caroline, Princess of Wales, which were found among the possessions of the Duchess Elizabeth of Brunswick after her death in 1767. The then reigning Duke of Brunswick gave his Privy Councillor Praun access to them and permission to make extracts. A garbled translation of this, in which many names were suppressed, was printed by the Libraire Maradan at Paris in 1788, and Praun's extracts were published at Strassburg in the following year under the title *Anecdoten vom franzoesischen Hofe, vorzuglich aus dem Zeiten Ludwigs XIV und des Regent. Aus Briefen des Madame d'Orleans, Charlotte-Elisabeth.* In 1823 the Libraire Ponthieu published the *Mémoires extraits de la correspondance allemande de la Duchesse d'Orleans*, which was simply a re-translation of the Strassburg edition, arranged by Depping. Still another edition of the same extracts was published by Paulin of Paris, in 1832, with a foreword by Ph. Dusoni.

In 1843 the Litterarisches Verein in Stuttgart commissioned Wolfgang Menzel to make extracts of the letters to the Raugraves, and in 1853 Brunet translated them into French. Two years later he added letters from Madame to Madame de Harling and the Princess of Wales. In 1861 Leopold de Ranke gave extracts from the letters to the Duchess of Hanover in the fifth volume of his *Histoire de France aux XIV and XVII siècles*, and A. A. Rolland translated them into French. Since then the Litterarisches Verein in Stuttgart has published the complete correspondence with the Raugraves in four large volumes, edited by W. L. Holland, and in 1880 Ernest Jaegle edited a collection, in French, taken from the Holland and Ranke letters. A collection of the letters of Madame to Etienne Polier de Bottens was published in 1903 by the Litterarisches Verein in Stuttgart. The only other letters published have been some small collections of letters included in various biographies and magazine articles.

In regard to translations into English, the Grolier Society of London published in 1904 a translation of the Strassburg collection alone, in a limited *édition de luxe*, and a very small number of other letters have been used in various memoirs of the seventeenth century and biographies of Madame. There would seem, therefore, to be a certain necessity for a collection in English following generally the lines of the Jaegle collection in French, but including also the many important letters which have come to light since 1880. Annotations have been introduced in order to make the letters intelligible to the general reader as well as to the student.

I must express my thanks to my friends Mr. J. Allan, of the British Museum Department of Coins and Medals, and Mr. R. Flower, of the Department of Manuscripts, for their interest and kindness, which has enabled me to reproduce the portrait medals of Madame and her holograph letter among the illustrations of this volume.

GERTRUDE SCOTT STEVENSON.

CHAPTER I.

1661-1676.

Madame at the Age of Nine.

19th May, 1661,[1] Amsterdam.

To MADEMOISELLE D'OFFELEN.

I felt I had to let you know that I think of you more often than you have any idea, and that I know that you are also thinking about me. I am bothered by the gnats, which bite me dreadfully. The journey was very pleasant; I must also ask you how my little cousin is; I need not make any excuses for not writing sooner, because you know very well that I couldn't do any better. I must say good-bye, dear Mademoiselle Offelen, until we see each other again soon, and I remain always your affectionate friend.

The death of the King of Denmark postpones a masquerade.

March 4th, 1670.

To MADAME DE HARLING.

I must tell you, dear Madame Harling, that my brother Charles and I intended to give a splendid party on Shrove Tuesday evening, at which we were going to dress up as gods and goddesses, but as the weather was so cold, the affair was postponed, and should have taken place a week ago. All our costumes were ready, and they were lovely. My brother was going to be Mercury, and I Aurora; Mademoiselle Kolb[2] was to be Ceres, and there was a Diana; in fact, we were all to have

[1] This letter was written by the little Princess Elizabeth-Charlotte at the age of nine years to her governess, Mademoiselle D'Offelen, who married in 1669 and became Madame de Harling. She died in 1702.

[2] Her governess after the marriage of Madame de Harling.

represented gods and goddesses, shepherds and nymphs. The triumphal chariots were beautiful and everything was ready, when, on Thursday, just as we were about to start, there came the news of the King of Denmark's[1] death, and it has all to be put off for six weeks unless something else happens in the meantime.

You see, dear Madame Harling, that it matters not at what time you wish to arrive, whether late or early. Since I am Aurora and have the gates of the dawn in my charge, I shall open them only when it suits me.

Madame's fondness for walking.

Saint-Germain, *5th February*, 1672.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

You will not receive my portrait for some time yet, as the one I had made for papa was not dry enough to send with the others, and I hope to be able to send those I have for you with papa's when it goes. You may be sure that I should prefer a thousand times to take them to you myself, or that you and my uncle should come here to fetch them, but I am afraid that neither the former nor the latter plan is possible. I can hardly believe that you will come here with my uncle. As for my accompanying the King on his expedition,[2] there is little probability of that, as the Queen is near the end of her time, and expects to be brought to bed any day now. . . .

People in this country know as much about walking as geese do, and except for the King, Madame de Chevreuse and myself, there isn't a person capable of walking twenty steps without breaking into a sweat and becoming breathless. . . . I hardly ever see the Duc Mazarin,[3] and I have not spoken to him yet,

[1] Frederick III of Denmark.

[2] To visit his armies in Flanders.

[3] Charles-Armand de la Porte, Marquis de la Meilleraie. On February 22nd, 1661, he married Hortense Mancini, favourite niece and heiress of Cardinal Mazarin, and received the title of Duc de Mazarin, together with the governorship of Alsace, Brittany and the fortress of Vincennes. A few days later Cardinal Mazarin died, and the newly-married couple inherited nineteen million francs and a great treasure of jewels, furniture, paintings, etc., which he had amassed. For several years the marriage was a happy one, until the Duke began to show signs of religious mania and insane jealousy of his wife, which led, in 1666, to her flight from home. From that time onwards, until she found a refuge at Whitehall in 1676, the Duchess fled in poverty and misery over the face of Europe, pursued

but the first time I have an opportunity of doing so, I shall insist on Cantenac's [1] making his apologies.

Madame's fears for her baby.

23rd November, 1672.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

How wearisome it is for a noisy, rough, and wayward girl not to be able to run, jump, or even ride in a carriage, and to have to be carried about in a chair! However, if it were only to be for a short time, one would make the best of it, but it will go on for nine months, and I find it dreadfully long and tedious. When at last this egg is laid, I should like to send it to you at Osnabrück, because you know better than anyone in this country what to do in such circumstances, and I know from my own experience that you would take good care of it. Here, no baby's life is safe. The doctors have already dispatched five of the Queen's children into the next world. The last died three weeks ago, and they have done the same for three of Monsieur's children.[2] He told me so himself.

Madame's affection for her husband.

3rd December, 1672, Saint-Germain.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

One thing I must tell you, that is, that Monsieur is the best man in the world, and we get on very well together. None of his portraits are in the least like him.

unceasingly by the fury of her eccentric husband. In 1672 she returned to Paris with her sister, Marie Mancini, Princesse de Palliano, to invoke the aid of Louis XIV, but finding him abroad and herself in imminent danger of seizure by her husband's spies, she fled to Savoy and never again returned to France. She died at Chelsea in 1699.

[1] A minor poet. Probably he had written some verses which displeased Madame.

[2] Two of Monsieur's children by his first wife, Henrietta of England, sister of Charles II, survived. They were Marie-Louise, born 1662, who married Charles II of Spain; and Anne-Marie, born 1669, who married Victor Amadée, Prince of Piedmont, afterwards King of Sardinia and Sicily.

Madame and her new page.

June 30th, 1673.

To MADAME DE HARLING.

I thank you and Monsieur Harling for the confidence you show in me by sending me your little nephew, and you may be sure that I shall take the greatest care of him. He is a lovely child, and Monsieur and I, as well as everyone else here, like him. He has already begun to serve with the other pages, and begins to speak and understand French. I have put him to live apart from the others in a house where the mistress will take care of him, wash his clothes, and make him say his prayers. I have had a little bed with curtains made for him, and he has his meals at the table of my maids of honour, where you may be sure he lacks for nothing. His first task as a page was to wait at table on one of the prettiest maidens in the country. This suited him very well, because when the young lady rose from the table, she kissed him twice. He must have found this much to his liking, for one day when she forgot the rite, the little monkey planted himself in her way and held up his cheek to her.

The birth of Madame's first child.

July 6th, 1673.

To MADAME DE HARLING.

I often think of the joy you will feel at hearing that I have been safely delivered of a son.[1] As I have always been like a daughter to you, it is as if you had gained a grandson. . . . He is a beautiful baby, and very sweet and healthy looking. Thank Heaven, nothing has happened to him since he was born. I am charmed to see how big and strong he is.

Madame's elder son, the Duc de Valois.

August 5th, 1673. Saint Cloud.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

And now about my youngster.[2] He is so strong and fat, that,

[1] The Duc de Valois, born 1673; he died three years later.
[2] The Duc de Valois.

by your leave, he looks more German or even Westphalian than French, as you will be able to see from his portrait. Everyone says he looks like me. Your Highness can guess, therefore, that he is not exactly a handsome young man, but as long as the Princess,[1] my god-daughter, likes him, all is well, for as you write, later on they will make a fine couple.

Madame's fondness for hunting.

10*th October*, 1673.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

I am looking forward to following the King's hunt on horseback next week. He wrote to me through Monsieur that he expected me to hunt with him twice a week. That will be quite to my liking, as Gibson used to say, for, as you know, dear aunt, your Liselotte[2] has always been a little devil. Moreover, riding will be useful to me for one thing that you have often recommended to me, I mean holding myself upright. My tutor has already borne witness that I do not stoop as badly as I used to, but, on the other hand, when I try to learn I don't get on at all as well. I make this confession to you just as I confess my sins to Father Jordan, or even more frankly, because I am more accustomed to confess to you than to him. Nevertheless, we understand each other very well, for he is a very good man.

Vain hopes of peace in the Palatinate.

Saint-Cloud, 23*rd August*, 1674.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

It is indeed to be hoped that God will give us peace, for if Monsieur de Turenne carries off many more beasts, broth will become very expensive in the dear Palatinate.[3]

[1] Sophie-Charlotte, daughter of the Electress Sophia.

[2] A combination of Madame's two names, Elizabeth and Charlotte, and which her aunt had given her as a pet name. Madame did not learn to ride until she came to France, but during the whole of her married life her days out hunting were among her chief delights.

[3] The Palatinate was beginning to recover from the Thirty Years' War, when Louis XIV attacked it in 1673. It was devastated by the French troops. This war was ended in 1679 by the Treaty of Nimègue.

The horoscope of Madame's younger son.[1]

Saint-Germain, *16th November*, 1674.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

I must tell you that I have had the horoscope of my younger son cast, and it says that he is destined to become Pope. I am, however, more inclined to fear that he may become Anti-Christ. . . . There is such a racket going on in this room that I cannot tell what I am writing. Monsieur is here playing at Bassett with ten or a dozen others, and instead of what I want to write, I find myself nearly putting the words, *Albiu, ra et la face.* I hear nothing else but those three words. The whole ten players (Heaven preserve me) shout them together so loudly that the noise beggars description, and is at least as loud as that made by the hounds this morning when I started a hare while out hunting with the King.

Madame's recovery from a serious illness.

Paris, *22nd May*, 1675.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

I am grateful to God not so much for having spared my life, as for having allowed the day to come when I am able to send my humble thanks to your Highness for the kind letter in which you set forth your affection for me, and express the grief you and my uncle felt for my serious illness. I am quite sure that you four, Monsieur, papa, my uncle, and yourself, have been the means of curing my fever and bringing me back to health, rather than Messieurs Braye, Baylay, Tissot, and Esprit. The joy of being sympathised with by you and the others has purged my spleen more effectively than all the seventy-two washings-out[2] these doctors have given me.

[1] Philippe, Duc de Chartres, afterwards Duc d'Orleans, the famous Regent; born in 1674 and died in 1723.

[2] Lavage of the lower bowel was the most popular method of medical treatment, at any rate amongst the nobility, in the seventeenth century in France, and has had an extraordinary vogue in that country even up to the present day. In the diary kept by the Court physicians of Louis' health there are records of more than two thousand purgations. The plays of Molière have many references to the use of the enema.

King George I at the Battle of Treves.

September 14th, 1675.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

First of all, let me express my joy that Heaven has deigned to preserve my uncle, godfather, and our prince from harm at Treves.[1] When I was told this news I could not jump for joy as I did when I heard about the winning of the battle,[2] because it was the King himself who announced the taking of Treves. He praised my uncle and godfather most extravagantly, saying that the prisoners couldn't congratulate themselves sufficiently on having fallen into the hands of such brave and generous foes. I told him in return about the noble conduct of our prince in the battle. How he had not only marched against the enemy himself, but had also been the means of saving the lives of many men. And when I told the King and Monsieur that he was barely fifteen years of age, they could not gainsay it. . . . I can assure you that I had a very good time at Fontainebleau, but my pleasure was turned to sorrow here, and found my eldest child almost at death's door. . . . I told Monsieur that if I were master here I should send my children to Osnabrück to live with Madame de Harling, for then I should be sure that they wouldn't die, and that they wouldn't be too much pampered, as the custom is in this country, which makes me furious.

The gallant conduct of Madame's uncles and cousin.

October 2nd, 1675.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

Nearly every day the courtiers bring some of our Duke's prisoners to pay their court to me, as they call it, because by now they all know what pleasure it gives me to hear their stories. Others repeat the things that prisoners have said. To-day they brought MM. de Sourdes and De Rochebrune to see me, but as I was just setting out to go to town, I had not time to talk to

[1] Ernest-Augustus, Duke of Hanover, George-William, Duke of Zell, and George-Louis, heir-apparent to the Duchy of Hanover and later King George I of England.

[2] The battle of Consarbrück, lost by the French, on 11th August, 1675. Treves surrendered on 6th September.

them, and asked them to return some other day. Every few minutes someone comes to my room and says, " Madame, here is still more praise of your uncles and cousin." It goes on like that all day. Even Monsieur brings some of the visitors, because he knows what pleasure it gives me. . . . In short, everyone at Court shows me the greatest respect, and I hear people saying as I pass, " These princes whom everybody is praising so highly are Madame's uncles and first cousin." For my part, I am very proud of it, and when I receive a letter from you I read it through three or four times, taking care to choose the place where there are most people, for I am usually asked who my letter is from, and I reply, looking back over my shoulder, " From my aunt, the Duchess of Osnabrück." You should see their eyes grow round, like cows before a new gate. I told Monsieur yesterday, as he was setting out for Versailles that the old Duc de Lorraine[1] and his staff had to let the garrison of Treves leave with full honours of war, and that my uncle and godfather were very angry at it. He promised to tell the King. I am going to Versailles to-morrow, but I shall not sleep there, as my eldest child is not quite well yet.

The death of Madame's elder son.

20th May, 1676.

To MADAME DE HARLING.

I could not reply to your letter any sooner because I have been so overwhelmed by the unexpected blow[2] with which the Aimighty has smitten me that I have only just begun to recover. You see now that I had good reason to wish that my children could be in your care, for I foretold this misfortune long ago. My trouble is that I don't know in the least how to deal with children, and have had no experience in such matters, so that I am forced to believe what they tell me here. But let us change the subject, because the more I think about it the more distracted I become. I have no one to console me now, because Monsieur left on Thursday with the King to join the

[1] Charles IV of Lorraine died, a fortnight before this letter was written, at the age of seventy-one years. After having taken Treves, he allowed the garrison to leave with all the honours of war, although they had betrayed their commander, the Maréchal de Crequi, by surrendering against his orders. Crequi was sent as a prisoner to Coblentz.

[2] The death of the Duc de Valois, her elder son.

army.[1] . . . Unless God accords his special protection to the baby I am carrying at present, I shall have a very poor idea of its chances of life and health, because it is impossible that it should not be affected by all my troubles.

Madame's anxiety about the health of her son.

May 30th, 1676.

To MADAME DE HARLING.

I wish that I could send you the Duc de Chartres [2] in a letter; then I should feel sure of his life. He causes me much anxiety, and I wish he were three or four years older and past the dangers of early infancy. The doctors know nothing about the care that children need, and will listen to nothing that they are told. Already they have dispatched a heap of children into the other world.

The Dauphin and his prospective bride.

August 30th, 1676, Saint-Cloud.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

I have not yet told the King, as you requested me, that my uncle is on the opposite side. There has been no chance yet, but as soon as a suitable occasion arises, I shall seize it and ask him if he has not noticed anything. . . . I am afraid that he will gnaw his fingers with rage at having followed the advice of that hulking peasant,[3] and at not having handled the nobles more skilfully. I hope, however, that once his eyes have been thoroughly opened he will look askance at this apostle. I should be glad if, in order to straighten things out, this fat fellow would arrange the marriage of my godchild with the Dauphin. I told Monsieur that you would rather have the Dauphin marry our princess than the Princess Electress of Bavaria.[4] He was delighted, and no one can please him better than by suggesting it. Moreover, he never sees me writing to you without sending you many complimentary messages.

[1] In the Palatinate, during the war of 1673-1679.
[2] Her son Philippe, born in 1674.
[3] The reference is to Louvois, Minister of War.
[4] Marie-Anne-Christine-Victoire of Bavaria, born 1660, died 1690, daughter of Ferdinand, Elector of Bavaria. She married Louis, the Dauphin, on 7th March, 1680, at Chalons-sur-Marne.

Madame in favour at the Court of St. Germain.

14th *December*, 1676, St. Germain.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

I beg you to accept my excuses for not having written to you for an eternity. In the first place, I have been to Versailles where we were busy the entire day. From morning until three o'clock in the afternoon we went hunting. On our return from the chase we changed our dresses and went upstairs to the gaming, where we stayed until seven o'clock in the evening. Then we went to the play, which did not end until half-past ten o'clock. After the play came supper, followed by a ball, which usually lasted until three o'clock in the morning, and only then could we go to bed. I leave you to guess whether I had time for letter-writing. Since my return here I have endeavoured each day to reply to your letter, but I have been constantly hindered from doing so, especially by unwelcome visitors,[1] for whom I have to thank a fall from my horse. I must tell you this story. We had already caught a hare and put a magpie to flight, and were going along very slowly, when I observed that my habit was not very elegantly arranged beneath me. I stopped my horse and leant over to adjust it, but while I was still in this position a hare started up and everyone set off in pursuit. My horse, seeing the others start off, wished to follow them, and gave a lurch to the side. I was already half out of the saddle, and this jerk made me quit it almost entirely. I seized the pommel without taking my foot out of the stirrup, hoping thus to regain my balance, but the moment I took hold of the pommel I lost the reins. I shouted to a cavalier who was ahead of me to stop my horse, but he rushed at me with such impetuosity that my horse took fright, and instead of stopping, turned in another direction and bolted. I held on

[1] An anonymous writer, a translation of whose memoirs of the Court of France was published by Richard Wellington, of London, in 1702, thus describes the fate of one such visitor: "The Countess of Grignan being then at Paris, went to see the Duchess of Orleans at St. Cloud, who had dislocated her arm by a fall from her horse at hunting; that Princess came to the house, after her arm had been set by a country surgeon that performed his office not amiss. But being still much pained she was so angry at the Countess's saying that she had come to congratulate the dispelling of her illness, that she was very near kicking her out of her presence. The Princess, who seldom disguises Nature, checked her so severely, that the Countess upon her return to Paris made it known to all her friends."

tightly as long as I saw other horses near me, but when I found myself alone I quietly disengaged myself and dropped gently to the green turf. So much fortune had I that, Heaven be praised, I came by not the smallest hurt. You, who so greatly admired the King for the attentions he paid me during my lying-in, will like him all the more in this affair, for he was the first to reach my side. He was as pale as death, and I had to assure him earnestly that I had come to no harm and had not fallen on my head. His anxiety was not relieved until he had himself examined every part of my head. At length, having assured himself that I had told the truth, he conducted me to my apartment, where he remained some time longer to see that I didn't swoon. Indeed, he only returned to the old castle when I had assured him positively that I didn't feel the least bit ill. . . . To tell the truth, I am more in favour with the King every day. He always speaks to me when he meets me, and nowadays he sends for me every Saturday to dine with him in Madame de Montespan's room. That means that I am actually very much the fashion, and that the courtiers admire whatever I say and whatever I do, whether it be good or bad. They carry their admiration to such an extent that when it occurred to me during this very cold weather to put on my old zibeline in order to keep my neck warm, they all had them made to the same pattern, and they are now the height of fashion.[1] I have a good laugh at this, for these folk who now admire this fashion so greatly are precisely those who, five years ago, used to mock at me and my zibeline so much that I dare not put it on. Things happen like that at this court. If the courtiers think you are in favour you may do what you like and you are sure of approval, but if they think the contrary, they would hold you up to ridicule, even if you came straight from Heaven. I wish you could come and spend a few months here and see the sort of life we lead. I am sure that you would be heartily amused. But we should be still gayer if your visit should come about in the manner I have so often desired, and which would not be a bad thing for my goddaughter. Speaking of this affair, we are anxious here because of a message which has come from Bavaria. We fear (especially Monsieur) that it may be a bad sign for our Mademoiselle. I should prefer to keep her here,

[1] The *Ladies' Dictionary*, 1694, describes a "palatine" as "That which used to be called a *sable tippet*, but that name is changed to one that is supposed to be finer, and *à la mode de France*."

for, besides being Monsieur's daughter, and therefore having my best wishes for her welfare, we have become accustomed to each other, and if the Princess Electoral is to become the Dauphiness, I should have to make a heap of new acquaintances. The King has had the history of his reign painted in miniature, but it has not been engraved on copper. . . . I am no longer afraid of being ridiculed, for, as I told you, I am too much the fashion nowadays for that. However that may be, no sensible person could take offence with me for doing all that I can to prevent a person who is as nearly related to me as the Princesse de Tarente [1] from acting in such a foolish way. . . .

[1] Amelia of Hesse, who had married Henri-Charles de la Tremoille, Prince de Tarente, was a sister of Madame's mother. In 1676 she went to live at Vitry near Madame de Sevigny, who cultivated her friendship diligently, and thus obtained many little civilities and some measure of protection from Madame and Monsieur that she would not otherwise have had.

CHAPTER II.

1678-1681.

Madame is worried by a cabal.

Paris, *14th November*, 1678.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

You expressed a wish to see the Devil make off with the members of the cabal.[1] I don't know what will finally happen to them, but one thing I am sure of, and that is that at present they are behaving like fiends. . . .

I am very proud that you think me better looking than the portrait I sent to Madame de Harling, but it is now seven years since you saw me, and if you were to see me as I am at present you would perhaps think just the opposite. Hunting all the time has not made me so old and ugly as has the cabal, which during the last seven years has given me so many wrinkles that my face is quite lined with them. Monsieur has just returned from Versailles with the news that next April we are to make an expedition into Flanders; from there to Lorraine, and from Lorraine to Alsace. I hope that I shall then be able to go to Strasbourg to see my brother, the Prince Elector[2] and his wife. You must try to take a trip there, too . . . What pleases me most about this project is that it is not a castle in Spain, but a plan which will be carried out. For Heaven's sake, then, journey to Strasbourg also, and my joy will be complete. You will then see that we all wear our hair like Mesdemoiselles de Valence and Montargis. All French women, except those who

[1] By the cabal Madame means several members of her husband's household who were very inimical to her, as they had previously been to her predecessor, Henrietta of England. The ringleaders were Madame de Grancey, Madame Gordon, a Scotswoman, the Chevalier de Lorraine and the Marquis d'Effiat.

[2] Charles, Elector Palatine of Bavaria, who succeeded his father Charles-Louis in 1680.

make a point of being old-fashioned, have their hair dressed this way. How you would laugh if you were to see me with *touffettes à la dinde.*

Madame is troubled by the etiquette of the French Court.

3rd February, 1679, Paris.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

We set out from Saint-Germain on the 15th April for Flanders. . . . If it is too far for you to come to meet us at Strasbourg in Alsace, you could arrange to meet me in Flanders at whatever town suited you best. I don't really know why my uncle wants to go to such a lot of useless expense for a trip like this, especially as it would be much more convenient for you to travel incognito. You would thus be rid of all this ceremony, which I should abhor with all my heart if it were to deprive me of the pleasure of seeing you.

I tell you frankly that people here are very puffed up and arrogant. It is unbelievable what airs they give themselves. Their pride simply passes description. Therefore I see quite plainly that it will not be possible for me to receive you in the manner which is your due, for Monsieur thinks that there is no comparison between himself and a Prince Palatine. Moreover, I have tried to find out privately whether you would be allowed an elbow-chair if I were to see you, but they wouldn't hear of it. So this is my plan, and the only means I can think of for seeing you. You must come incognito to some town in Flanders and let me know where you are staying. . . . then I shall pretend that I am merely going to visit the house where you are, and will shut myself up in a room with you and my uncle, where I shall just be your old Liselotte again, with whom you can do as you wish, for she is and will be until death, your very humble servant. By this means we shall be freed from all this stupid etiquette. As for my suite, I need not worry about them. I shall take Monsieur into my confidence, and will send them wherever it pleases me; then when you are tired of me, they will return and fetch me. . . . For Heaven's sake, don't refuse me this great joy. I think I shall swoon if it is granted to me to see both you and my uncle. I am hoping by the same ruse to see my brother, the Prince Palatine, and his wife at Strasbourg.

[*Jean Petisoins.*

LOUIS XIV.

[*Nocret.*

PHILIPPE, DUKE OF ORLEANS,
called Monsieur.

A solution is found for the problem of etiquette.

25th March, 1679, Saint-Germain.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

On reading the opening lines of your letter, I trembled for my plan . . . but God bless you for thinking of the convent at Strasbourg. It is an excellent idea. There, at least, we shall not be troubled by silly ceremonies. What troubles me now is that our journey is postponed, and we will not leave here until May. . . . Heaven grant that this delay does not bring us disappointment. . . . I wish it were already the day for our departure from Saint-Germain. I am afraid I shall never have the patience to wait until then, and as papa used to say, "*Je prends patience en enrageant.*"

Mademoiselle's fate is not yet decided, but I expect that I shall be able to give sure tidings about it when I see you. If my goddaughter had been only two years older, I should not have despaired of you know what, in the event of Mademoiselle's going to Spain. They say here that the Princess Electoral of Bavaria is monstrously ugly and very delicate in health, but these are matters about which it is better to talk than to write. . . . Three weeks ago I wrote a long letter to the Duchesse de Mecklenbourg, from which you will see how our carnival passed off. At the end of the letter I told her frankly what I thought of her plan for reconciling my uncle and my godfather by means of such an absurd marriage, as you will see if you ask her to show you my letter. I have many other things to tell you, but here comes Monsieur into my room, bringing Madame la Comtesse[1] and Madame de la Vieuville[2] to play *ombre*.

The betrothal of Madame's step-daughter.

5th June, 1679, Paris.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

We are overwhelmed with visitors, because the whole of France is coming to congratulate us on the betrothal of

[1] The Comtesse de Soissons.

[2] Saint-Simon says of Madame de la Vieuville: "She was beautiful but poor and stupid, though good. Having been brought up as a servant in the house of Madame de Nemours, under the name of Mademoiselle d'Arrez, Monsieur de la Vieuville fell in love with her and married her."

Mademoiselle [1] to the King of Spain. Our King announced the marriage last Sunday. . . .

If she were not going to be so great a queen, I should pity her for having to go to a country about which she knows nothing at all. Another matter which should be even more helpful in reconciling her to it, is the complete indifference with which the Dauphin regards the affair. He is a true son of his mother.

Horse-racing and a quarrel at St. Germain.

27th October, 1679, St. Germain.

To the RAUGRAVE CHARLES-LOUIS.[2]

Yesterday I went stag-hunting with the King. There I heard some news which distressed me very much. The King has ordered poor Monsieur Valbel to sell his commission. Here is the reason for this indignity. The King had ordered him to pay 50,000 francs in order to have his rank raised to that of lieutenant, but they had divided the lieutenancy into two separate commands. Now Valbel had commanded the company alone for a long time, and had served the King very well, so he took it into his head that he must be First Lieutenant, and that it was an insult to him to put anyone over him. He went straight off to the King and told him in a peevish manner that he would rather serve him as a common soldier than remain in the service with someone over him. The King was annoyed, and said that he acknowledged the fellow's worth, but since he had become so swollen-headed that he imagined himself insulted he could sell his commission and go to the devil.[3] I am sure

[1] Marie-Louise, elder daughter of Monsieur by his first wife, Henrietta of England ; she was born in 1662, married Charles II of Spain, and died in 1689.

[2] Madame's half-brother.

[3] That he did not do so is probable, for it seems certain that this is the Jean-Baptiste de Valbelle who continued to have a distinguished naval and military career until his death in 1681. The following incident earned him great renown : While returning from the expedition to Castellamare his ship became detached from the rest of the squadron and fell in with an English vessel. The two countries were at peace, but the English captain took it upon himself to order the Frenchman to salute. Valbelle refused, then seeing the other preparing to use force, made straight for the English ship and boarded her. A terrible fight took place which left him victoriously in possession. The ship was eventually handed back by the French Government. But the English Navy swore to be revenged. A watch was kept for Valbelle's ship, *Le Persee*, and it was finally caught off the Balearic Isles by four English ships. Valbelle again refused to

that it will be the death of the poor man, he'll take it so much to heart. I am sorry because he was a really good fellow. . . . Here is some more news which will surprise you. Last Tuesday Monsieur le Grand [1] and Monsieur de Vendôme [2] arranged a horse race. The Duc de Gramont [3] wagered on Monsieur de Vendôme, and Monsieur le Grand's two brothers and many others backed him. We all of us had something at stake. Lavallée was up on Monsieur le Grand's horse, and an English servant of the Maréchal de Bellefonds [4] rode Monsieur de Vendôme's. The Maréchal also bet a lot of money on the horse. It was Monsieur le Grand's horse that won. Thereupon we all betook ourselves to our carriages to return to the Palace, except the Dauphin, who stayed on the other side of the river to go for a ride. When we were all ready to start, the Duc de Vendôme began to quarrel with Lavallée. Lorraine, who was near by, said, jokingly: "We always bet against people who have no money." The Duc de Gramont began to curse under his breath, and Monsieur le Grand, who was beside him, said: "Who are you swearing at? Let us be off, and Vendôme and Lavallée can finish their quarrel."

The Duc de Gramont went up to Monsieur le Grand, and sticking his fist in his face, said:

"S'death! It is you I want a reckoning with, and I have been looking for a chance for a long time."

Monsieur le Grand immediately lifted his hand and gave the

salute and opened fire. For four days he kept up the fight against terrible odds, until *Le Persee* was a battered wreck stranded on the sands and rapidly filling with water. Still he did not surrender, but having asked and obtained permission from the Governor of Majorca to land on the island, did so and set fire to his ship. A ship was lent to him to enable him to return to France, and on his arrival Louis XIV gave him the command of a squadron.

[1] Louis de Lorraine, Comte d'Armagnac. Not one of the old family of d'Armagnacs, the first of whom to hold the title was Bernard, called "Le Louche" (squint-eyed), in 960. That family died out in 1497, and Louis XIV revived the title in 1645 in favour of Henri de Lorraine, Comte d'Harcourt.

[2] Louis-Joseph, Duc de Vendôme (1654-1712). He was a distinguished soldier, but to posterity he is as well known for his cynicism and vices as for his magnificent courage and many victories in war. He was the patron of Alberoni, Italian cardinal and minister of Philip V of Spain, who had great influence at the French Court.

[3] Antoine, Duc de Gramont (1604-1678). The elder brother of Philibert, Comte de Gramont, the pleasant and accomplished libertine, whose career as a courtier and lover, as told by his English brother-in-law, Anthony Hamilton, provides such entertaining reading.

[4] Bernardin Gigault, Marquis de Bellefonds (1630-1694). He was Marshal of France, and came to England as Ambassador in 1678.

other such a blow that his wig fell off. Luckily neither of them had a sword, because they had taken them off in order to follow the race more easily. At this point some of their friends came up and gave them each a sword, while others, notably Monsieur de Marsillac and the Chevalier de Lorraine, threw themselves between the two to stop the fight. At this instant one of the Duc de Gramont's grooms came up, drew his sword and set upon the Chevalier de Lorraine, thinking he was Monsieur le Grand. When the chevalier saw this, he raced after the man, who, seeing him and realising his mistake, took to his heels as quickly as possible, but he was caught and received a gash across his face. One of Monsieur le Grand's suite, on the other hand, threw himself on the Duc de Gramont, and if Beaumont had not stopped him, would have run him through. But at length the Duc de Villeroy dragged Monsieur le Grand into his coach, and Marsillac and Vendôme did as much for the Duc de Gramont, and they were brought here.

When the King heard of the affair, he bade Monsieur order them, in his name and under heavy penalties, not to allow a continuation of the quarrel, either by themselves, their relations, or their followers. Since they had been lacking in the respect due to the Dauphin, and quarrelled and fought in his very presence, they were ordered to the Bastille until further instructions. They only stayed there, however, twenty-four hours, because last night the King ordered them to be sent for.

This is how things are here. Every day something new happens, but it is hardly ever anything good. For the rest, we still talk about the bears all the time unless something new turns up ; one of them is dead and the other is in rollicking good health. Last night we even discussed them at the King's table.

Still more news. Poor Doudou is having horrid rows with her husband. When she returned from taking the waters at Bourbon with her sister and brother-in-law, the Duc and Duchesse d'Aumont, and the Chevalier de Tilladet, that brute, the Duc de Ventadour, took it into his head to take his wife into the country, where doubtless he intended to keep her a long time. Since his brother-in-law the Duc d'Aumont, did not approve of this (because the scoundrel is not to be trusted, and has before this put a bullet through the door of his wife's room, and has several times terrified her by brandishing his naked sword at her), he was determined to fight a duel with both the Duc and the Chevalier Tilladet. However, they only jeered at

him. He became furious, and threatened to take his wife away by main force. At this the poor Duchesse broke out into a cold sweat with fear, and sent a messenger post-haste to the Court to find Marshal de la Motte. He straightway told the King all about it, and his Majesty immediately sent an officer (you know him well; he is called Fourneaux, and used to wait at table for the Queen of Spain at Fontainbleau). Next day the Duc de Ventadour came himself to Court to make his excuses, and the upshot of it is that they are to separate. Poor Doudou will have to retire into a convent for the rest of her days, or at any rate until her husband's death. But she will be allowed to emerge occasionally with her mother and her eldest sister. He will give her twelve thousand crowns (or it may be francs, I am not sure which), for her expenses, and another sixteen thousand when his uncle dies. That is the whole story of Doudou. . . .

I would have you know that you may quite safely come to Saint-Cloud and trample to your heart's content on the head of Madame de Fiennes, for the old she-devil is dead! That message is from Monsieur le Grand. I had forgotten to tell you that she died of an ague after eight days' illness. The Duchesse de Villars is a widow. Her husband died three days after Madame de Fiennes.

Marriage plans for the Dauphin.

28th October, 1679, Saint-Germain.

To the Duchess of Hanover.

To-day I went out riding with the King, and he talked about you the whole day; he finds a great difference between you and the Duchess of Hanover [1] whom he saw to-day. The poor Duchess was so embarrassed that I felt truly sorry for her. She did not know what she was saying, and persisted in calling the King Monsieur. The King looked at me and laughed, and when we had taken our departure he said to me, "It is a pity your cousin is not witty like your aunt, for it is a pleasure to entertain her; but as for this lady, I said to my brother, 'Come, brother, let us run away!' I must admit that I prefer intelligent people." . . . You have been a true prophet, and she will

[1] This Duchess of Hanover was the widow of Jean-Frederic of Hanover, brother-in-law to Madame's aunt.

be left for the princes of the Blood, while your place will be with the Royal Family.[1] . . . The Duchesse de Villars is a widow. That is a great piece of good fortune for her, because her husband was a horrible looking jackanapes, with a hunch before and behind. . . .

They say that the Council has urged the King to get the Dauphin married soon, so his Majesty sent Monsieur Colbert,[2] who was once ambassador at Nimègue, post-haste to Bavaria to propose the marriage of the Princess Electoral with the Dauphin, but only after that of the young Prince Electoral with Mademoiselle has been arranged. They say that if the Prince Electoral will have none of Mademoiselle, Monsieur Colbert has orders to make no mention of the marriage of the Princess with the Dauphin, and to proceed direct to the Court of Austria, where he will request the hand of the Princess Imperial. I do not vouch for the truth of the latter part of this story, but the first part is true, and no one doubts but that next Spring we shall have the Princess of Bavaria here, because the King often talks about it, and quite recently he said, " If she has any wit, I shall speedily begin to tease her about her ugliness." Besides, he has stopped making enquiries about this marriage, and we read in that a sure sign that it is decided upon. When the King asked him whether he could endure to take unto himself an ugly wife, the Dauphin replied that he wasn't the least bit in the world worried about it, and that he would be quite content if his wife was intelligent and virtuous, however uncomely she might be. This decided the King in favour of the Bavarian.

Monsieur's delight in finery.

1st November, 1679, Saint-Germain.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

I am taking advantage of this opportunity in order to send you the King's diamond buttons. Monsieur is very sorry not to be able to show you himself how they should be placed on a gown or on sleeves.[3] He has already consulted Madame de

[1] The Duchess of Hanover desired to marry one of her daughters to the Duc de Maine, eldest son of the King and Madame de Montespan, while the Electress Sophia would have liked her young daughter, Sophie-Charlotte, to marry the Dauphin. Neither match took place.

[2] Charles Colbert, Marquis de Croissy, brother of the great Colbert.

[3] Monsieur, according to Saint-Simon, " was always tricked out like a

Mecklenburg on the subject, and she will send you a paper pattern, so that you will understand. My uncle, I hope, will again ask you what you want with the trash. If I dared, I should often ask Monsieur that, too. He also regrets that he has not seen your pretty fastenings, and, although I have drawn him a diagram, as you know, he isn't yet satisfied. He scrutinised it with his lynx-like eyes, and now that he has assured himself that my description was exact, he is all the more sorry not to have seen the fastenings themselves.

Paying calls in Paris.

15th December, 1679, Saint-Germain.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

Last week we were at Paris, where all our days were occupied in paying visits. A week ago we went to Montmartre to call upon the Grand Duchess,[1] and from thence to the Princess Palatine's.[2] On Saturday I visited all the brides, including the Princesse de Guemenée and the Duchesse de la Rocheguyon, who is a daughter of Monsieur de Louvois. From her house I went on to see Madame de Ventadour, who is shut up in a convent, and is not allowed to come to Court, not even to see the Queen or myself. On Sunday I had to go to call upon the Princess Palatine, whom I wished to consult, because, between ourselves, let me tell you that I find myself again drawn into a quarrel, and the cabal has played me another of its tricks.

woman, laden with rings, bracelets, jewellery and ribbons wherever he could plaster them on. He used to scent himself with all sorts of prefumery, and was even accused of putting on a perceptible amount of rouge."

[1] Marguerite d'Orleans, daughter of Gaston Duc d'Orleans and Marguerite de Lorraine. In 1661 she was forced, much against her will, to marry Cosimo III de Medic, sixth grand duke of Tuscany, who was attractive neither in appearance nor character. She found life with him insupportable, and obtained permission in 1675 to return to France and live in the Convent of Montmartre, where she kept all the privileges of her rank and the liberty to visit at Court, where she was a great favourite, when she wished.

[2] Anne of Gonzago, born 1616, died at Paris 1684. She was a daughter of Charles de Gonzague, Duc de Nevers, and later of Mantoue, and of Catherine de Lorraine. In 1645 she was married secretly to Prince Edward of Bavaria, fourth son of the Elector Frederic V. It was she who arranged the marriage of her niece, Elizabeth-Charlotte, with Monsieur.

The Marriage of the Dauphin.

On Monday the King sent me a command to go to the Chase with him, and I did so. It would be better, however, to relate what is necessary than just to tell you what I have been doing, in order to excuse myself for having allowed so long a time to elapse without writing to you. But so that you may know that —even if I do not write—I am nevertheless thinking about you and trying to serve you, I will tell you what I have attempted, though, alas! without success, since my last letter. First, I came round to your plan of dealing with Monsieur de Louvois, and seeing that the gallant was trying to flatter me, I gave him to understand that the greatest pleasure he could do me, and one which would make me overlook everything else, would be for him to urge with all his power what we both long for so keenly. I added that I desired it all the more because it was my personal conviction that it would be as good a thing for the King as for us, seeing that the family is a great and powerful one in Germany, and being already on friendly terms, would, perhaps, be more ready to render services than any other. Besides, there would be no need to worry about the numerous brothers-in-law, because they would never interfere, and they are all such powerful nobles that they would not be coming here to seek their bread. The Princess Palatine supported me so well that Monsieur de Louvois decided in favour of it, and told me that if the negotiations which have already been entered into with Bavaria were going as badly as they were said to be, he would put our plan before the King, and he also gave me leave on his behalf to speak to the King if I found an opportunity. I thought, therefore, that the business was well set on foot, and when I found myself beside the King in his carriage, I discreetly led the conversation round to the marriage of his son. He told me that their attitude was quite firm in Bavaria, and that Duke Max would have none of our large-mouthed damsel. I replied that I already knew that quite well, because I had been told it in a letter from Germany. He asked me who my informant was, and I replied, "My aunt, the Duchess of Osnabrück." To further my end I added that marriage negotiations were sometimes set on foot which came to nothing, like this Bavarian one. The King replied sharply, "Although this marriage is not yet settled, I by no means consider it broken off. My son is so desirous now of getting married that he will not wait any longer, and if I give way on certain points, it is

a sure thing that they will throw the Princess at my head." To this I replied, " It will be a great compliment to the Bavarian if your Majesty concedes anything." I hoped that might touch his pride, but he replied, " The affair is settled, and my son will rejoice, for he was very anxious, and was afraid that the marriage would fall through. I am going now to tell him that he may write to the Princess." After that I held my tongue, and said nothing about the other affair.

Yesterday the letter to the Princess of Bavaria was actually written. . . . As you see, the plans for the Bavarian marriage are now so far advanced that nothing can overturn them. I cannot imagine who has put it into the Dauphin's head to be in such a hurry to marry. Three months ago if anyone spoke to him about marrying he would become so gloomy that his face immediately showed how he felt about it, whilst now he is counting the minutes until the arrival of the Princess, and one cannot please him better than by saying that he will be married as soon as possible. The King himself is astonished at this change of heart, and says that he is only hurrying on the marriage thus because he sees his son's impatience. What is most surprising of all is that people tell him quite bluntly to his face (the King's son, if you please), that his betrothed is ill-favoured, and he doesn't mind in the least. . . . I explained to Monsieur that the Elector now wished to send on my dowry.[1] He laughed and said that he had not really believed that it would ever come, but if the Elector were now in a mind to send it I had better let it come. . . .

The Queen of Spain.

I must inform you that Monsieur has sent away the Marshal's wife [2] who was in charge of our children, and has put Madame d'Effiat in her place. With regard to Monsieur's children, I had almost forgotten to tell you about the Queen of Spain. I had letters from her to-day, and as far as I can judge from these letters and from the stories of the people who have come back from there, Spain is the most horrible country in the world. Their manners are the most stupid and annoying that can be imagined. Poor child, I pity her with all my heart for having to spend her life in such a country. The little dogs

[1] Madame's dowry of 32,000 German florins had not yet been paid by her father, the Elector Palatine.

[2] The Maréchale de Clerembault.

that she took with her are her only consolation. Already such severe rules of behaviour have been imposed upon her that she is not allowed to speak to her old groom. She may only make a sign to him with her hand or nod to him as she passes. The French servants could not accustom themselves to being shut up at first, and they all wanted to return to France.

Madame negotiates for the King.

19*th May*, 1680, Fontainebleau.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

The beginning of this letter will, no doubt, surprise you, because I am writing it at the King's command. He came to me this morning in the Queen's room and said : " Madame, I have commanded Monsieur d'Arcy [1] to go and interview your uncle d'Osnabrück on my behalf, and you will oblige me by writing to your aunt to ask her to look favourably upon the negotiations he will propose on my behalf. When you have written, send your letter to Colbert du Croisy." Those are the King's own words, word for word. I replied that I would do the King's bidding immediately after dinner, and that I was sure that you would be glad, if it were at all possible, to have an opportunity of serving his Majesty, and that I knew that such had been your disposition when you left here. I do not know what it is all about. The King did not tell me. But Heaven grant that it may be something good. Monsieur d'Arcy, however, is a good fellow, and I hope that you will get on well with him. The King wants me to send this letter to Monsieur du Croisy, who will doubtless send it to the aforesaid d'Arcy.

The death of Madame's father.

24*th September*, 1680, Saint-Cloud.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

I have wept so much that my eyes hurt ; I cannot see clearly, and I have great difficulty in writing, but in spite of all this, I cannot let our Prince [2] depart without giving him a letter for

[1] The Marquis d'Arcy, Ambassador to the Court of Hanover.

[2] Charles-Louis, the eldest of the young Raugraves, Madame's half-brothers. He had come to seek his fortune under her wing in Paris, but since he could obtain no suitable charge, he entered into the service of the Republic of Venice.

you. Although the terrible loss we have sustained fills me with sorrow beyond all expression, yet it seems to comfort me to write to one whose affliction is as great as my own, and who shares my grief.[1] . . . Now that I have an opportunity of doing so safely, I can speak freely, and tell you that however great your loss, you are at least happier than I, because you are not forced as I am (and it is a matter I find it hard to stomach) to live amongst those who certainly are responsible for the late Elector's death because of the trouble they caused him. You say in your last precious letter that you rejoice with me because I am near the King, with whom I so much like to be. Well, I admit that before he persecuted papa to such an extent, I liked him very much and was always pleased to be with him, but since then, I tell you frankly, his presence is odious to me and always will remain so. . . . Henceforward my life must be one of sorrow.

Madame is frank about Louis XIV.

11th December, 1680, Saint-Germain.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

You have guessed aright when you say that what is worrying me so much is the fear that papa died of grief and disappointment, and that if the Great Man[2] and his ministers had not tormented him so greatly we should have had him with us for a long time yet. . . . Monsieur suggested to the Queen that she should make a vow to Saint Ovid so that her son may regain his health. I told him that it would be more fitting to propose to the King that he should take a vow to be just in future, and to render to everyone what is his due—in short, to stop helping himself to other people's property. If he were to do that, doubtless his son would recover.

Madame's story of a schoolboy.

April 13th, 1681, St. Cloud.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

I know some very good stories, and I really must tell you one I heard a few days ago. The incident happened three

[1] The Elector Palatine died in 1680.
[2] One of Madame's names for Louis XIV.

weeks ago at the Jesuit College. The Chevalier de Lorraine seems to think that it was his son who was the hero of the escapade, and that he is up to some such trick every day, as you will see.

There was, so the story goes, a schoolboy who played all sorts of mischievous tricks, and wandered about all night when he ought to have been fast asleep in his bed. The fathers threatened him with a sound thrashing if he didn't stay in his room at night. What did the urchin do but go to a painter and beg him to paint the portraits of two saints on his buttocks ; to be precise, St. Ignatius on the right and St. Francis Xavier on the left. The painter having obliged him, he cheerfully pulled up his breeches and returned to the school, where he began to play a hundred-and-one monkey tricks. The fathers laid hands on him, and vowed that this time he was going to have the birch. The lad fought and pleaded, but all in vain. Then he threw himself on his knees, and cried, " Oh, St. Ignatius, Oh, St. Xavier, have pity on me, and perform some miracle to show that I am innocent." The fathers relentlessly seized him and pulled down his breeches, and as they turned up his shirt to thrash him, the youngster said, " I am praying with such fervour that I am sure my prayer will be answered." Then the fathers saw the two saints, and cried out, " A miracle has been performed, and he that we thought a rogue has turned out to be a saint ! " They threw themselves on their knees, saluted the boy's behind with kisses, and called all the pupils together. . . .

The lovers of Olympe.

26th June, 1681, Saint-Cloud.

To the RAUGRAVE CHARLES-LOUIS.

Everything here is just the same as when you left. There are just as many false devils who hate me, and brew as much trouble for me as they can. . . .

Afterwards we went to Versailles, where hunting has begun again, as well as all our ordinary routine of life.

The Dauphiness has been very ill with a miscarriage, followed by a serious attack of fever. The King, Queen, Monsieur and I visited her four times daily. . . .

Saint-Chamant has recovered from his fever, but is he cured

of his love? I do not know. With regard to Olympe,[1] there is no more danger from that quarter, because *l'amant qui lance la foudre* no longer importunes her, and the affair has had no consequences. If you were here now you might try your fortune with her without having to fear *la majesté suprême*, as they sing in the ballet. Talking about the ballet, they made some ballads about Olympe and have set them to various melodies. They are not at all complimentary to her, and if you had been here you might have been included in them, because all her lovers are mentioned by name.

[1] Olympe de Brouilly de Piennes, afterwards Duchesse d'Aumont. The ballad referred to is included in the *Recueil de Maurepas*.

CHAPTER III.

1682.

Madame and the Censor.

19*th February*, 1682, Saint-Germain.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

I dare not tell you on paper what is the cause of my trouble. because I know very well that my letters are opened and read. The post office does you and me the honour of sealing our letters up again very carefully, but those of the worthy Dauphiness are often sent on in a dreadful state, and are actually torn open by the authorities. When I see this happen, I often think of the passage in the Scriptures, " *S'il en est ainsi du bois vert, que sera-ce donc du bois sec ?* "

I assure you that all is not gold that glitters, and in spite of the vaunted French liberty, all their amusements are namby-pamby and formal to a degree. Moreover, ever since I have been here I have seen so much depravity, that if I were to find myself in a place where hypocrisy did not reign supreme and false speaking was not encouraged and approved as it is at this Court, I should think that I had indeed found Paradise. . . .

The Princess Electress still writes to me daily, and she shows a real affection for the young Raugraves.[1] If she sends nothing to Charles-Louis, it is because she cannot, for she has trouble enough herself in making both ends meet. I do not know what my brother was thinking about to let the Comte de Castel become so powerful. It is a conclusive proof that his wits are more addled than mine, because if I were Elector I should be more lord and master than that.

[1] By his morganatic marriage with Louise de Degenfeld, the Elector-palatine Charles-Louis had eight children, five sons and three daughters. The old title of Raugrave was revived in their favour. On his death they were left without resources, and the five sons all took service in foreign armies.

A friend of Madame's is sent away from Court.

23rd August, 1682, Versailles.

To the RAUGRAVE CHARLES-LOUIS.

My enemies have persuaded Monsieur to send my poor Theobon[1] away from me, as they did the Maréchale de Clerembault some years ago. You know how much such things hurt me, and this affront took place under far more serious circumstances than the last.

Madame is the victim of calumnies.

12th September, 1682, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

Unfortunately the Chevalier [2] and his satellites always succeed in their wicked schemes. All the devilish plots they hatch against me are as successful as they could desire. As you see, it would be a thousand times better for me to live in a place that was peopled with ghouls and evil spirits, for the good Lord would not let such things have dominion over me, but the Chevalier's accursed friends have far too much power over my affairs. They are flesh and blood. The King and Monsieur allow them to practise every imaginable sort of villainy. I have proofs of this every day. What matters it that the Chevalier has corrupted the son of the Great Man and has talked in the most abominable way about his daughter, and that he persecutes me daily? Nothing untoward ever seems to happen to him. He seems even to flourish more than people who walk in the straight path

[1] "The Comtesse de Beuvron was another woman whom, like the Maréchale de Clerembault, it was better not to displease, and she was a great friend of mine. She was well-born and came from Gascony, her father being the Marquis de Theobon, whose family name was de Rochefort. She was a maid of honour to the Queen when she married the Comte de Beuvron. The Comte was Captain of the Guards to Monsieur. She became a widow in 1688, and was left without children and very poor. The intrigues of the Palais Royal caused Monsieur to send her away, to the great annoyance of Madame, who was not allowed to see her for several years, and after that only saw her at rare intervals in secret in convents at Paris. She wrote to her every day of her life and received replies by a page whom she sent for that purpose . . . She was a very intelligent and tactful woman, and apart from her temper and a passion for the gaming-table, was very kind-hearted and a good and true friend."—Saint-Simon.

[2] The Chevalier de Lorraine.

May the Lord hear your prayer, and let the Devil shortly carry him off to his kingdom! But as he would be frightened if he were to go to Hell alone, I wish him the Marquis d'Effiat for a travelling companion. This latter should know the way there well enough, because, considering his abominable vices and all his wickedness, I can't help thinking that he must have been a liegeman of the Devil's before he took on human form, and came here to drive me distracted. . . . In this last affair it is at myself alone that they are aiming, and they have attacked my honour and reputation. I am very fond of Mademoiselle Theobon, and I should have regretted her separation from myself with all my heart, but if they had left it at that, I should not have been as upset as I am, and should have acted exactly as I did when they sent the Maréchale de Clerembault et Beauvais away from me. Her sole crime was that of being too fond of me, and of being liked by me. It is the same with Theobon. In order to make me feel this last blow more keenly, my enemies aggravated it in the following way. Three months beforehand they spread a story that I had an affair, and that Theobon carried my letters. At length their schemes succeeded so well that Monsieur turned her out without warning, and forbade her ever again to have anything to do with me. The Chevalier de Beuvron was only dismissed in his turn because they were afraid that I might speak to him and give him messages for Theobon. I leave you to imagine what the world must be thinking about this behaviour. There are many other things about this matter that I must tell you, but I cannot trust them to the post. I shall send you a complete account by Wendt. . . . With regard to the Dauphiness, I am charmed with her. She is very good, and shows me all sorts of friendliness. . . . I had determined to go and spend the rest of my days at Maubuisson, and for three whole days I never stopped begging the King to let me depart. At last he told me that he was absolutely set against it, and that I must put the idea out of my head, for he would never consent to it as long as he lived, whatever happened to me. Last week I went to see my aunt Louise, and I cannot get the thought of Maubuisson out of my mind.

Madame and her calumniators.

19*th September*, 1682, Saint-Cloud.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

You have probably not forgotten what I told you when you were here about the collisions I have already had with the Chevalier de Lorraine,[1] the Marquis d'Effiat,[2] and all their gang. I told you that our relations with one another were strained but still quite open ; but in order that you may understand the story that I am going to tell you, you must know that when I follow the King on horseback to the chase I ride directly behind the Captain of the Guards, and thus am always surrounded by the officers, who do me many little civilities without my having anything else to do with them. You know what I am like ; as soon as I make the acquaintance of anyone, I converse freely with him. That has been my way all my life. But as bad luck would have it, things have fallen out thus. On the evening of Shrove Tuesday everyone was at the masked ball except myself. I could not go, nor did I wish to, as I was still in mourning for the Elector. The next evening I was sitting at play with the Queen as usual, and all the courtiers were standing round, as they do every evening, when a dispute about the play arose. Behind me was an officer of the Guards called Simsen, and as he is a good player, I turned around and asked him his judgment on the point. At the same moment Madame de Grancey came

[1] The Chevalier de Lorraine was a younger brother of Monsieur Le Grand. He early ingratiated himself with Monsieur so successfully that he was virtually master of Monsieur's household and remained indispensable to him throughout life. After Monsieur's marriage to Henrietta of England, the Chevalier and his associates plotted continually against her to undermine any influence she might acquire over Monsieur. She succeeded, however, in having the Chevalier exiled to Rome, whence, according to popular belief, he sent a subtle poison by a messenger called Morel to the Marquis d'Effiat and the Comte de Beuvron, the former of whom administered it to Henrietta, who died shortly afterwards. By the time of Monsieur's second marriage the "cabal," as Madame always calls them, were more in favour than ever, and immediately proceeded to treat the new Madame as they had the first, without, however, daring to resort again to poison. The Chevalier was a man of handsome appearance and great personal attraction, but vicious morals. He was almost as great a favourite with the King as with Monsieur.

[2] Antoine de Ruze, Marquis d'Effiat. He was Master of the Horse to Monsieur and afterwards to the Regent. The Abbé Dubois, recognising his intellectual qualities, allowed him to help him with his duties in connection with the education of the Duc de Chartres, and later he became his preceptor. Madame has much to say against this appointment. See page 88.

up to me and said, " Do you know the man to whom you are speaking ? " " Why shouldn't I know him ? " I replied, " I see him beside me every day at the chase, as I do all his brother officers, and he, like the others, is very courteous in bringing up my horses." " Then," she said, " is he one of your friends ? " " Why do you ask me that ? " I said. " Because I want to know something," she replied. " What ? " I asked. " Yesterday at the ball this man insulted me," she said ; " he thought me so old that he maintained vigorously that I ought to give up dancing. He must have wanted to please somebody by acting thus." I said that as I had not been at the ball, I could not know what had taken place there, but that if she liked I would speak to him about it. " It is quite unnecessary," she replied, and I thought no more about it. It didn't seem worth while, until some months later someone asked me if I knew the story that was going about Paris. I said that I did not. " Well, Madame de Grancey [1] is complaining that you caused her to be insulted by the Chevalier de Sinsanet, who did it because he desired to please you." This made me laugh, and I said that I should take no notice of such a ridiculous story. Some months later they told me again that everyone was talking about me and this fellow. I said that these stories were on a par with those they spread about the Archbishop, and that I should go on as usual. I heard nothing more about it until last year, when we returned from Germany. Then the King said to me, " I understand from a source that I trust that your enemies have hatched a wicked plot against you. They are trying to make Monsieur believe that you have a love affair." " Your Majesty knows very well," I replied, " that it is not true, and if you wanted to help me you would send for those people whom you know to be spreading these rumours about me, and you would tell them plainly that it displeases you to have me thus calumniated, and that they have been too presumptuous in trying to embroil me with Monsieur. Will you protect me ? " The King replied, " If I

[1] Elisabeth De Grancey, daughter of the Maréchale de Grancey (1653-1711). In her youth she was notorious for her loose conduct, and was the heroine of many scurrilous ballads, some of which are to be found in the *Recueil de Maurepas*. For many years she ruled the Palais, where according to Saint-Simon she was installed with the courtesy title of Madame de Grancey, as Monsieur's mistress. It is evident, however, that his tastes led him in other directions. At one time she nearly captivated the King. The Marquis de Saint-Maurice writes in 1669 : " It is certain that the King is tired of Madame de Montespan and looks favourably upon Mademoiselle de Grancey, whom ' Monsieur ' and Madame de Coetquen are foisting into favour."

do as you wish I shall not be able to help you with my brother, for they have planned to go to him to-morrow or the day after. It is the Gordon woman who will be the tale-bearer, and that means that they have already won him to their way of thinking, so that if I send for them, as you ask, they will not hesitate to tell my brother about it, and it will not make them stop their lying, and in addition my brother will be able to reproach me with intriguing with you against him." Then I replied, " If the story were true, that I was carrying on an affair of gallantry, Monsieur would have some reason to be vexed with your Majesty, but since it is a deliberately invented lie, your Majesty will only be doing what is fair to Monsieur in getting him out of this dilemma." " The more I think about it," said the King, " the less I see the necessity for speaking to them about it, for my brother knows you well, and for ten years now everyone has known that you are not in the least given to gallantry. That being so, your enemies can say what they like, and it won't do you any great harm."

That was all that the King said, but the whole business lay heavily on my heart, because I know, alas ! only too well, what influence my enemies have over Monsieur's mind. For three or four days I was very downcast, and did not know what to do. But I thought that perhaps the best thing to do was to go on as usual and to avoid speaking to the man. Then if Monsieur worried me again to know why I was so solemn, I would tell him the whole story frankly, only keeping secret that I had heard about it through the King, because he absolutely forbade me to mention him. A few days later, then, Monsieur again asked me why I was so sad, and I at last told him everything. I said that according to a warning I had had, my enemies amongst his followers were going to send the Gordon woman to him to accuse me of loose conduct. Monsieur seemed greatly surprised at this revelation, and said, " It is impossible that anyone should have thought out such a plot, and you have only been told so in order to poison your mind against my friends. If that is all that is troubling you, you may put your mind at ease, because I do not believe that you have ever misconducted yourself. So cheer up, and do not worry any more. If anyone, Gordon or anyone else, is insolent enough to suggest such a thing to me, I know how I shall reply to them." I thought that his words came from his heart, and I stopped worrying and went gaily off to the King to tell him about it. He said, " I think that your

enemies only allowed this story to come to my ears in order to raise a hubbub, and I am very glad that I passed it on to you, and that everything has been so satisfactorily settled." A month later one of my friends said to me, " Your enemies are raving mad because their plan fell through, and they held a consultation, at which Madame d'Effiat agreed, since you no longer speak to the Chevalier de Sinsanet, to spread a story that you are meeting him in secret, and that Theobon carries your letters." (They had no idea that it was the King who had warned me, and thought it was Theobon). " Moreover, in order to make the plot more sure of success, they have decided that neither the Chevalier de Lorraine nor d'Effiat nor Madame de Grancey shall say anything about you to Monsieur, but that they will whisper to him all that they want him to know, as if it were tittle-tattle coming from Paris at third or fourth hand." This disclosure put me in a terrible predicament, because if I were to have told Monsieur, who has no idea of holding his tongue, my enemies would have known all about it immediately, and, without carrying out their plan, would say that it was my spite and wickedness which made me accuse them. Monsieur, besides, had promised me so sincerely that he would not believe anything that anyone told him on this subject since he had implicit faith in me, that, unfortunately for me, as it turned out, I resolved to say nothing.

Several months passed, and Monsieur never mentioned the matter to me. His behaviour was quite as usual right up to the moment of the King's arrival at Saint-Cloud. From that moment his manner to me became very cold. I thought for a while that this was because he was so occupied with the house full of strangers, but at length someone told me that my enemies were again spreading incredibly horrible scandals about me. Not content with spreading the old gossip, they now added that I was now running after the Admiral. I told the King, but he only burst out laughing. " But," I said, " this is perhaps the meaning of Monsieur's coldness to me." The King said nothing at the time, but a few days later when we were out hunting, he said, " You are right to be anxious. Monsieur is very much vexed with you and Theobon. He even asked me to insult you in front of the Hunt, but I refused at once, and told him that he was quite in the wrong, and that I would put my hand in the fire that you had done nothing which could displease him." You may be sure that these words went straight to my

heart. I was so indignant that I was afraid I should lose control of myself if I spoke to Monsieur myself, so I sent for Bois-franc and said to him, " Monsieur is so greatly displeased with me that I am worried about it, especially since I know what sort of stories people are spreading about me. Everyone says (and this was true) that Monsieur is going to dismiss Theobon because I am supposed to be carrying on a secret love affair with her help. Be good enough to ask him from me to remember that the scandal of this outburst will recoil on him as well as on myself, and that if he is absolutely determined to have a row, I demand to be confronted with my accusers ; then if they succeed in convicting me of the behaviour of which they accuse me, it will not be sufficient punishment merely to send away Theobon, he ought to ruin me entirely and throw me into a convent. If, on the contrary, I shall prove that what they are doing to me was planned in a consultation they held four months ago, that I knew all about it but did not wish to speak of it, also that I am sure that neither the Chevalier de Lorraine, d'Effiat, nor Madame de Grancey said anything to Monsieur about me until he spoke to them of his own accord, that all the stories were brought to him by others as news in order to convince him that he only learnt them by chance. Tell him also that in case he still doubts, I shall not rest until I have confronted them, on condition that if I succeed in justifying myself, my accusers shall be punished as they deserve."

Monsieur sent back word that he did not know how the rumour arose that he was thinking of dismissing Theobon, that he had no intention of doing so, and that he didn't know what I was talking about, and did not desire any explanations. The King said, " I beg of you not to mention me, because I promised Monsieur that I would keep it a secret from you. But if you will take my advice you will keep quiet, and treat your enemies and their slanders with supreme contempt. It is all the easier for you to do so, because I and all honest French people are quite convinced of your virtue, and far from being impressed by these foolish tales, we laugh at them. In his heart Monsieur himself does not believe them, but you know quite well how he is when people who are your enemies obsess him. There is only one thing for you to do, and that is to be patient." This homily showed me that I could expect no help from anyone, and I became so melancholic that I resolved to go and end my

days with my aunt at Maubuisson.[1] I spoke to her about it the next time I went there, but I could not make her understand that it was a well-considered desire. She thought that I was only vexed. Time went on, and Monsieur de Verneuil happened to die, and the King gave his governorship to his own bastard, the Duc de Maine. Immediately afterwards there was the scandal about Monsieur du Vermandois.[2] Then I said to Theobon, "Do you know what is going to be the outcome of all these happenings? You and I are going to be made to pay for the governorship, and for all that is done to these people who are out of favour with the King." My prophecy has been only too fully realised. The King forbade the Chevalier to accompany him to the chase, whither he came only to annoy me, and Monsieur went to Madame de Maintenon and bewailed the fact, saying that the King could have neither affection nor consideration for him since he ill-treated the people that he, Monsieur, was fond of. In short, he poured forth all sorts of similar lamentations, which were immediately repeated to the King by Louvois, who is my enemy and the Chevalier's friend. Shortly afterwards I found the King quite changed. When I began to speak to him about my own affairs he replied curtly and changed the subject. About this time there began to be rows between the Prince de Conti and the Chevalier de Lorraine, about which you have probably heard. Then my enemies went to Monsieur and told him that Theobon and I had aroused the Prince against the Chevalier, although I call upon Almighty God and the Prince himself to witness that such an idea never entered into my head, nor Theobon's either, but Monsieur thought fit to believe it. Some days later they spread the story that I had sent my portrait and 500 pistols in a letter addressed to the Chevalier de Sinsanet. You can imagine that was about as true as the rest. Indeed I do not know how people can believe such stories, especially as I have never such a large sum of money in my possession, except on New Year's Day. As a result of

[1] Louise Hollandine, daughter of the Elector Palatine Frederick V, and, therefore, sister of the Duchess of Hanover. She became converted to Catholicism and was made Abbess of Maubuisson in 1664. Madame was very fond of her, and visited her regularly until her death in 1709 at the age of eighty-six. Her earlier life was not exemplary, and Madame writes that "The Abbess of Maubuisson has had so many bastards that she used to swear by 'this body which has borne fourteen children!'"

[2] The son of Louis and Mademoiselle de La Vallière. He had been debauched by the Chevalier de Lorraine and was in disgrace with the King. He was killed at the war in 1683, at the age of sixteen.

this fine story, Beuvron and Theobon were dismissed, and forbidden to have anything to do with me ever again in their lives. In addition, they forbade any of my servants to take letters from me to them.

You can judge whether I have good reason to be sad. I begged the King to let me go and finish my days at Maubuisson, saying that I could not find any help anywhere against the attacks of my enemies, and that since Monsieur could so easily be persuaded to offer me an affront, even though it reflected upon himself, I could henceforth expect nothing but endless misery, shame, and dishonour. In order, therefore, to relieve his Majesty of my importunings, calm the hatred of Monsieur, and hide a sad spectacle from the eyes of the world, and find a little peace for myself, I could see nothing better to do than to betake myself to Maubuisson, as I suggested to his Majesty. In order that the King should not think that this was only a mood brought on by my present troubled state, I added, " Your Majesty should know that I have made up my mind to this course four months ago, and if you do not believe me, you have only to send off at once to Maubuisson and ask my aunt whether I have not spoken to her about it. Therefore, I pray your Majesty very humbly to grant the permission which I crave, and allow me to make the same proposal to Monsieur at once." The King said, " My brother feels very differently about it. He has written to me begging me to speak to you and persuade you to make it up with him, and I must confess that I hope with all my heart that you will, because I am fond of you both, and I assure you that I should very much like to help you to be happy again, for I am very sorry to see you so miserable, and I sympathise with you." I replied, " The reconciliation that Monsieur asks for is as surprising to me as was his anger, and at present I deserve this mark of affection as little as I deserved his hatred before, because I have done just as little to conciliate him as I did to annoy him. But, Sire, if your Majesty has any affection for me, and really wishes to restore my peace of mind, you alone have the power to do it. Let me go, I beg you, to Maubuisson." The King replied, " But, Madame, consider well what the life there will be like for you. You are still young and have many years yet to live, and this is a serious step to take." I said, " I admit that I used not to understand how anyone could live in a convent, but nowadays I see that it is no use living purely and trying to do one's best, because bad people have only to invent

a tale and it is believed, although their own black and wicked lives are well known. In spite of that, my honour has no protection, because promises count for nothing. Monsieur promised me faithfully that he would not listen to my enemies, and this promise was founded on the ten years that I have lived a blameless life here. Moreover, Sire, now that I find myself friendless, it seems to me prudent to do of my own accord what otherwise I shall be forced to some day. For I perceive that my enemies will not dare to play the same trick as they did before, because I have, unfortunately, said too often that I knew all about it. So they will have to poison me in Monsieur's mind and in yours. They have already succeeded with him, and how do I know that they won't soon win you over too ? " The King interrupted me and said, " No, never, Madame. I am very sure of your virtue, and I know you well in that respect. No one will be able to injure you with me ; your mind may be easy on that point, and you know very well that my brother doesn't really believe them either, because he wants to be reconciled with you." I said, " That is, Sire, because he wants to please the public, but the damage is done, and I know the effect that such an affair has in foreign countries, and I realise what I have to fear ; and although Monsieur may be persuaded that it will do no harm to his reputation and mine, I don't agree with him, and I assure you that I can hardly bring myself to appear in public. So, for God's sake, let me go whither I suggested, for in truth I can no longer live in the midst of these cruel enemies, watching the pleasure they take in the sorrow and distress they cause me. Be assured that I retire from the world with no regret. I am only sorry that I shall no longer have the honour of following you, but beyond that there is nothing in the whole of France that I regret leaving, and when I am in the convent Monsieur will see that I have not left him in order to amuse myself elsewhere, and that ought to prove my innocence to him. So once more I beg as a last favour to be allowed to go, and that I may be permitted to broach the subject to Monsieur ; and if your Majesty will grant me another boon, I beg of you do not forsake poor Theobon, who is as innocent as I am, and whose misfortunes are due to her love for me." In reply to this the King said, " I will do anything to assuage your grief that I can without annoying my brother, so I promise to take care of Theobon ; as for what you have resolved, I cannot consent to it and forbid you to mention it to my brother, but if your desire

to go does not vanish we will reopen the subject some other time." With these words the King dismissed me, but when I saw him again in his carriage he said, " Well, Madame, how are you feeling now ? My brother has been talking to me all day, and he seems to be extremely eager to make his peace with you and to do as you wish in the future, and as for myself, I should be charmed to bring about a complete reconciliation between the two of you." I said, " Sire, you are very good, but of what use are these peace offerings of Monsieur's ? He doesn't love me. He never did—not even when I was deeply attached to him. How could he love me now when I know that his feelings are exactly the opposite of friendly towards me, and he has just given me brutal proofs of it ? So, for God's sake, Sire, let me go away." Then the King said, " Well, Madame, since I see that your mind is absolutely set on your project of going to Maubuisson, I will speak to you quite frankly. Get that idea out of your head, for as long as I live I will never give my consent, and will oppose it if necessary with force. You are Madame, and it is your duty to uphold the position. You are my sister-in-law, and my affection for you will not permit me to allow you to leave me for ever. You are my brother's wife, and I cannot allow you to make such a scandal as will do him grave harm in the eyes of the public. Therefore, fight no more against these reasons, because, whether you say one word or a thousand, and come what will, I refuse to let you go into a convent." I replied, " You are my King, and therefore my master. I neither can nor wish to do anything without your consent, so I say no more. It is your wish that I shall be miserable and unhappy all the rest of my life, so it is my duty to make up my mind to endure it." He said, " I do not want you to be unhappy." " But how can I avoid it, so long as these enemies of mine surround my husband ? " I asked. The King replied, " Madame, my brother will be reconciled with you and will promise to annoy you no more." I said, " After what has happened, can I trust Monsieur's promise for one moment, and who will guarantee that it will not happen all over again ? " " I will do that," said the King. I replied, " The guarantee is sufficient, provided that it is entered into in good faith." The King said, " I will not deceive you, Madame. In all future quarrels you may have with my brother, if it is between him and you I shall be for him, but on the other hand, if it is between you and other people, I shall take your part, and believe me I

speak as one who loves you." I said, "Sire, your words are my commands, and I should and will do what you order me, so you have only to speak." The King replied, "Now that I see you ready to listen to me and follow my advice, I will say, in the first place, that you have only to tell me the names of the people you dislike in your household, and I will see that my brother gets rid of them, and I will give Theobon double the pension that she has at present. I think that I may even be able to arrange for you to see her after a few months. I shall make myself, as I promised, the arbitrator in your difficulties, and I will arrange the reconciliation. In order to prevent recrimination, you will bring all your troubles to me. Now, if you are willing we will have our peacemaking this evening, because my brother is dying of anxiety." I said, "Arrange things as you will, because since I may not go where I know that I should have peace, I leave everything in your Majesty's hands."

The very same evening the King brought Monsieur to my room and said, "Madame, I have already told you how my brother feels, and how much he desires to reconcile himself with you and to try to live worthily in the future. I have told him how your only opposition to this arose from your desire to retire to Maubuisson. Neither he nor I will ever consent to that, so now you are both willing to embrace each other before me and to appoint me arbitrator in any differences you may have in the future, and I promise you that I shall act with better faith than I did between the late Madame and my brother, but I had my reasons then, and they do not hold good now. I do especially exhort you never to have explanations, for they only raise bitter feelings in the mind. As for these foolish stories that are going about, look you, brother, I am always ready enough to believe the worst, but I have examined this case closely, and I would put my hand in the flames that Madame is entirely guiltless." Monsieur said, "I believe so, too." "Then let us all three embrace," said the King. We did so, and the reconciliation was thus brought about.

Next day the Chevalier de Lorraine, d'Effiat, and Madame de Grancey sent messengers to me to say that they were in despair at having incurred my displeasure, and that they humbly begged me to accept their submission, and would promise me to behave so well in future that I would never regret having forgiven them. I replied that they might have done so at any

time during the last four months while I was complaining bitterly every day about their behaviour, and that now I needed some time to collect my thoughts, and would reply to them as soon as possible. Then I went to Madame de Maintenon and begged her to tell the King on my behalf that my enemies had made this proposition to me, that Monsieur had not said a word about it to me, and that as his Majesty was the arbitrator of all, I did not think that I should do anything without his advice and orders. I said that it was to be feared that they would again deceive me as they had done four years before, and that, moreover, I thought that I should find it very hard to forgive people who had attacked my honour as they had done. I thought that all I could do to show the respect I owed Monsieur was not to demand vengeance nor public satisfaction, and I begged his Majesty to tell me what I should reply to them. That evening the King sent for both Monsieur and me, and gave his commands in these terms.

" In the first place, brother," said he, " in order to show you that I intend to act sincerely, I give Madame the advice she has asked me for, about the application which the Chevalier, the Marquis d'Effiat, and Madame Grancey have made to her, and I do so in your presence. I do not think that she should enter into any explanations or reconciliation with them. Let her live at Saint-Cloud openly for the love of you, and, if after a time they are behaving well, then it will be another matter—we shall see. But for the present, Madame, don't make any peace!" I replied, " You shall be obeyed in that and in anything else you command me." Next day the King said to me, " I told you to live amicably with your enemies, and it will be easy for you to do so, because this last thing that they have done to you has done them so much harm in the world, and has given them away so badly, that you can tell people nothing new about them if you do complain. So treat them with contempt, and console yourself with the reflection that everyone, including myself, does you justice."

Judge for yourself, therefore, whether I am right or wrong, and then we will never mention the affair again. One more word however, to finish this letter—or rather book, for it can hardly be called a letter—but I longed to tell you everything in detail, since I had such a safe opportunity. Let me add, moreover, that if you will do him the honour of listening to him, Wendt will tell you how my enemies corrupt my servants and by what

means and practices they seek to injure me, and you will see even more plainly how unhappy I am.

Madame and the death of Monsieur's first wife.

24th November, 1682, Paris.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

God is my witness, as well as the whole Court and my entire household, that I never said an angry word to Monsieur in spite of all my trouble. I never reproached him in the slightest, nor spoke evil of him behind his back. On the contrary, I was at special pains to be on my guard against saying anything to him to which he could take exception, and when he vexed me by making allusions that hurt me, I never uttered a single word. How could I, in any case, have taunted him with the death of his wife, when I am more sure than anyone else in the whole world that the crime was committed without his knowledge ? [1]

A jour d'apartement at Versailles.

6th December, 1682, Versailles.

To WILHELMINE ERNESTINE, ELECTRESS PALATINE.

To-day is a *jour d'apartement.* In order to understand what this means, you must know that the King is having a long gallery [2] built, leading from his apartment to that of the Queen. This gallery is not quite finished yet, however, and the King has had the part which is completed cut off and made a drawing-room of it. Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays are *jours d'apartement.* All the members of the Court assemble in the King's antechamber, and all the ladies meet at six o'clock in the Queen's

[1] Monsieur's first wife, Henrietta of England, daughter of Charles I and Henrietta-Maria, died in circumstances which were considered to be highly suspicious of poisoning. She had been feeling very unwell for some hours, and awaking from a sleep called for a drink. A cup of iced chicory water was handed to her by Madame Gordon, her maid of honour, who took it from the hand of the Marquis d'Effiat. Immediately after drinking it the Princess was seized with violent pains and became so seriously ill that she died eight hours later. Monsieur's satellites were suspected of having poisoned her, and many people thought that it was done with Monsieur's consent. Charles II. demanded an autopsy and was represented at it by two English doctors, but nothing untoward was found.

[2] La Grande Galerie des Glaces.

room. Then they all go together into the drawing-room, of which I have just spoken. From there they go into a large chamber, where there are violins playing for those who wish to dance. The King's throne is in the next room, and here is every sort of music, including concertos and choral singing. The next room is the bedroom, where there are three tables for card-playing. One in front of the King, one in front of the Queen, and the other before Monsieur. The next room is so large that it might almost be called a hall. Here there are more than twenty tables, having green velvet covers with twisted gold fringes, where all manner of games can be played. From thence one goes into a large antechamber, where the King's billiard table[1] stands, and from this room into another, where there are four long tables laden with good cheer. All sorts of good things are provided, including fruit tarts and sweetmeats. It looks just like the tables we set for Christmas Eve. Beyond this there is another room with four more tables as long as those holding the eatables. On these tables are set out many glasses and carafes and every sort of wine, Rosolis of every sort, wines from Saint-Laurent, Italian wines, negus, as well as many natural wines. Whoever desires to eat or drink comes to these two last rooms. As soon as the eating and drinking—at which people stand—is finished, the company goes into the rooms where the greatest number of tables are, and there they settle down, each to his favourite game, and you cannot imagine what a choice there is. Lansquenet, tric-trac, picquet, reversis, ombre, primero, chess, raffle, three dices, backgammon, trou madame, berlan, somma summarum, and anything else that anyone can think of to play. When the King and Queen come into the room none of the players stand up. Those who do not play, like me and many others, wander about from one room to another, sometimes listening to the music and sometimes watching the gaming—in fact, one is allowed to do whatever one likes. This goes on from six o'clock until ten o'clock, when everyone goes to supper. That is what is meant by the *jour d'appartement*. Were I to try to tell you with what magnificence all these rooms are furnished, and what a brilliant display of silver there is everywhere, I should never be done. It is certainly well worth seeing.

[1] The game of Billiards is mentioned in Shakespeare, but it was not much played until the time of Louis XIV, who, having been advised by his physicians to play a game that was not sedentary, introduced it at his Court and thus made it very fashionable.

CHAPTER IV.

1683—1686.

The death of Queen Marie-Thérèse.[1]

19*th January*, 1683, Saint-Cloud.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

I am sure that you were greatly surprised at hearing the lamentable news of our Queen's sudden death. As for me, I was completely overwhelmed by it, because the good Queen used to show me the greatest affection. So you can imagine how painful it was for me to see her give up the ghost like this, right under my eyes, after only four days' illness. On Monday night she took ill with a fever, and last Thursday at three o'clock in the afternoon she died. Her death was due to the ignorance of the doctors, who killed her as surely as if they had pierced her heart with a sword.

The Duke of Monmouth plots against Charles II.

15*th July*, 1683, Châlons.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

I have seen nothing yet of either Monsieur de Moranges nor the sausages he is bringing me. I thank your Grace very humbly. They will come in very handy for my lunch when we begin hunting again on our return to Versailles. In the meantime we are hearing many strange stories here. They say that the Duke of Monmouth has conspired against his father, the King of England,[2] and has attempted to have him assassinated,

[1] Marie-Thérèse, daughter of Philip IV, King of Spain. She was married to Louis XIV in 1660, and had been merely a figurehead at the Court for many years.

[2] The Green Ribbon Club Plot, in which Monmouth was involved, debated plans for a general insurrection against Charles II, at the same

also that the Turks are so near Vienna[1] that the Emperor has watched the Tartars from his windows setting fire to the villages. That makes me hope that all Christian kings, princes and nobles will make peace amongst themselves in order to stop the advance of the Turk, and that therefore there will not be another war.

" Princess Toutine " and the Raugrave.

18*th July*, 1683, La Ferte-sous-Joar.

To the RAUGRAVE CHARLES-LOUIS.

My aunt writes to me that since Fraulein von Levenstein has become a maid of honour to the Dauphiness, Amelia might very well become one too. But I am not of the same opinion at all, because I know that I couldn't endure to see Amelia walking behind Mesdemoiselles de Rembure and Jarnac, who would call her " my friend." I think you will agree with me. Talking about the Court here, a certain person[2] asked me if you had quite forgotten her. I said you had not, but that you were so unhappy that you couldn't bring yourself to speak about her. She suggested that you should give her a different name from the one she usually bears. I said that you had already done that, and that you called her Princess Toutine. She laughed heartily at that and said : " I pray you, Madame, tell the poor Raugrave when you write to him that Toutine sends her compliments, and that as she told him, she does not love him as a lover but as a very dear friend, and that she hopes he still has the same affection for her as he used to have." When you answer please put your compliments in French so that I shall be able to understand them !

Madame's husband and her mother.

19*th August*, 1683, Fontainebleau.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

The Electress, my mother, told me herself at Domfæssel that

time as the Rye House Plot was formed for his assassination ; on the failure of the conspirators' plans Monmouth went into hiding, but was forgiven by the King and exiled.

[1] Vienna was besieged by the Turks for three months in 1683, and was relieved by John Sobieski and the Polish and German armies.

[2] This probably refers to the Dauphiness, who was a Bavarian Princess

she found my husband changed. He was really quite well, but was afraid that the Electress would begin to talk about what happened, so he was very ill at ease. Luckily for me (and, to tell the truth, at my own request) mother said nothing about it to him, and now that everything is fairly peaceful, I think that we should let sleeping dogs lie. . . . I did not suggest that we should arrange a meeting, because they say continually here that my uncle wants to declare war on the King and is raising troops for the purpose, so I thought that a meeting just now would be very indiscreet.

The death of Monsieur Colbert.

September 25th, 1683, Fontainebleau.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

For the last fortnight I have heard nothing but stories about the death of Monsieur Colbert. I'll tell you all those I remember. Perhaps you know a book published lately called "Dialogues of the Dead." In it all sorts of dead people, both ancient and modern, are supposed to talk together. To this idea we owe the following invention: Satan stopped the Queen on her way below and asked for news of France. "Alas!" she replied, "I know nothing about affairs of State; I never have known anything of them, in fact." As she was speaking, up rushed another devil, puffing and panting, and cried: "Let the Queen go. I have brought you someone who can tell you everything worth knowing," and as he spoke he ushered Monsieur Colbert into Hell. I enquired what scandal they put into the mouth of Monsieur Colbert, but no one could tell me.

The whole populace was so aroused against him that at his funeral they would have liked to have torn his poor corpse into ribbons, and the King's footguards had to line the road from his house to the church where he was buried. Even then they couldn't help innumerable lampoons, in verse as well as in prose, being stuck on the walls of the chapel where his tomb is.

A water-carrier at Paris came to the fountain with a long streamer of black crepe on his hat. His friends asked him for whom he was wearing such deep mourning. "Alack," he replied, "you should all be wearing it as well as me, for Monsieur Colbert is dead." "What of that," exclaimed the others. "Why should we wear mourning for him?" "Why," he

JAMES II.

replied, " because we should all be grateful to him for not taxing the water we carry."

Madame has a hunting adventure.

Fontainebleau, *29th September*, 1683.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

The last time we hunted at Fontainebleau I might have had a very bad accident if I had not remembered at the right moment my ancient skill in jumping, and thus hastily vaulted off my horse. A doe, frightened by the chase, or rather by running into the rider in front of me, leapt straight towards me with such violence that in spite of all my efforts I could not hold my horse and pull him up short enough to avoid the shock of the beast, which bounded up and struck my mount in the mouth, breaking its antlers and the horse's bit and bridle. My horse was so frightened that it did not know what it was doing. It squealed like a bear and jumped aside, but when I saw that it had lost the bit I turned the bridle round in its mouth and threw myself to the ground where I held it firmly until my followers came to my aid. If I had not acted so quickly the horse would probably have broken my neck and I assure you that you would have lost in me a faithful servant.

Madame speaks of her husband.

29th September, 1683, Fontainebleau.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

When other enemies hate you and do you an injury, there is always the consolation that some day you can pay them back, but against this one I am not allowed to seek vengeance, and even if it were permitted I should not want to do it, since no misfortune comes to him that I do not share. Indeed, if he is in trouble it falls to my lot alone to soothe him. If any sorrow overtakes him, it strikes me with the same blow. Everything bad that happens to him I share, but of anything good I have no part. . . .

As for the King, I do not really know whether he will marry again. But to tell you the truth I think he will.

A fête abandoned by the King.

3rd September, 1684, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

We were going to have a great fête at Marly at which the King intended to give presents to all the ladies, but news of the affair leaked out too soon, so that all the ladies of quality wished to be present at the party, and as the time approached for our departure for Marly there arrived such masses of people and such a throng of ladies that we could scarcely turn round. Many of them had been to the shops where the things had been obtained to see how much had been bought and what they had cost. When the King heard this he was very angry. "They will persuade themselves that my presents are so very magnificent, that what I actually give them will appear nothing in comparison," he said, and the fête was accordingly abandoned. The King kept the articles of jewellery himself and made us play amongst ourselves for the brocades, ribbons and fans. . . .

Madame is lectured by the King.

May 11th, 1685, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

It is not yet known whether the Princes de Conti[1] are going to Dalmatia. I am sorry that they did not go to your Court. They would at least have seen that our princes and reigning dukes in Germany are not so very insignificant and that princelings from this country have no reason to consider themselves so superior. People here are becoming so sanctimonious that the other day the King sent his confessor to mine to tell him to give me a good wigging on three counts. First, because I was too free with my language and told the Dauphin that I could see him stripped from head to foot and neither he nor anyone else would lead me into temptation! Secondly, that I allow my ladies to have lovers, and, thirdly, that I joked with the Princesse de Conti about these gallants.

These three things upset the King so badly that if it weren't for my being his sister-in-law, they say he would have sent me

[1] Louis Armand de Bourbon, Prince de Conti (1661-1685), and François Louis de Bourbon, Prince de La Roche sur Yon (1664-1709).

away from Court. You may be sure that I am very much annoyed with the King for treating me like a serving wench. That would have been all right for his precious Maintenon. She was born for that sort of treatment, but I was not. If I had been exiled from Court, you may depend upon it I would have run away and come to see you.

Madame and her husband's mistress.

1685.

To MONSIEUR ETIENNE POLIER DE BOTTENS.

Nothing fresh has happened here since I saw you, but I know for certain that Madame la Daubie spent three hours shut up with Monsieur in private while he was at Paris. I should not be surprised if this conversation had consequences. Whatever they may be I remain of the same opinion as you found me before. . . .

Madame and her brother's will.

1*st November*, 1685, Fontainebleau.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

With regard to the opinion of yourself and my uncles on my brother's[1] will, let me say between ourselves that I know nothing of what is going on here about business affairs, but Breton tells me that the Abbé de Morel is very much inclined to have my brother's will invalidated and that of my father, the late Elector, reinstated. According to what Breton tells me, they have had the copy that Charles-Louis sent me translated into French and have handed it over to the aforesaid Abbé, who is investigating the originals. As far as I can see, however, this business will be so long drawn out that I shall have rotted away in my grave before they finish with it. I am sure that the King suspects me of still being a Huguenot,[2] because he placed my claims in the hands of the Pope without saying anything to me about it, and if Monsieur had not mentioned it by chance after the

[1] With the death of Madame's only brother in 1685 the ruling family in the Palatinate became extinct in the senior line, and the Electorship passed to the head of the younger branch, Philip-William of Neuberg.

[2] Madame had been brought up in the Lutheran faith, but was formally converted before coming to France.

thing was already done, I should have known nothing about it even yet. But we must keep quiet on that subject in case we make matters worse. The King is so terribly changed in every way that I hardly recognise him any more. I know quite well what is at the root of the change, but I am powerless to prevent it.

Madame refuses her aid to a "mischievous priest."

22nd March, 1686.

To Monsieur Etienne Polier de Bottens.

When I see you I shall have a great deal of news to tell you, but it is the sort which is referred to in the German proverb: *Alle tag was neues und selten was guts.* This is the case so often that in the long run one gets used to it. My consolation is that I know myself to be incapable of the things of which I am accused, and I could not behave with such cruelty as they show me; and since God is just, I hope that sooner or later everyone will get his deserts. I have to write a long letter to my mother and that is why I can only say this time in great haste that I have not sufficient influence with Père de la Chaise [1] to get him to do anything for Monsieur de Cantenac,[2] and the King is indisposed and confined to bed, so I shall not importune him. You can give Cantenac a friendly hint that his changing his benefice so often will sooner or later annoy the King, because it makes him look so restless. Between ourselves I think that the estimable Cantenac did wrong in entering the Church, because it is a profession, I should think, which needs a leveller head than his. But enough of Cantenac and all mischievous priests, because if I were to let myself go on that subject I should rattle on too long—as I should likewise if I were to discuss all those who are mischievous without being priests, for I know a great many of them. . . .

[1] François d'Aix de la Chaise, Jesuit and confessor to Louis XIV.
[2] Formerly secretary to Madame's father.

The property of a married woman.

5*th May*, 1686, Saint-Cloud.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

The fate of the young Raugraves grieves me very much, and I wish with all my heart that I could come to their aid, but I do not know how to set about it, since I know nothing about business matters. If the question of the inheritance depended upon me alone, then indeed I should know exactly how to act. But they tell me that I have nothing to do with it, and that Monsieur as owner of our joint property is the sole lord and master. I must say that, as far as I am concerned, that seems a very stupid arrangement. . . .

Madame is visited by the Duchess of Hanover's son.

18*th May*, 1686, Saint-Cloud.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

I do not know where Brusseau found out that the furniture at Heidelberg is so magnificent. Except for the tapestry of Julius Cesar and that of the Festival of Bacchus the rest is, as you say, in tatters. Prince Charles [1] still honours me by coming here very often. Monsieur offered to lodge him in the castle, but he preferred to come and go. To tell you the truth, that is much more interesting for him, for the Prince is no great gamester, and the principal occupation in this house is gaming.

The foundation of the convent of Saint-Cyr.

11*th June*, 1686, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

The Princess de Conti has no voice in the management of the new convent of Saint-Cyr. The King and Madame de Maintenon alone arrange everything, and I have heard the King himself say that the girls will be so well brought up that he wishes that his own daughters had had such an education. The convent that has been built for them is very large and beautiful.

[1] The Duchess of Hanover's son, Charles, was paying a visit to the French Court.

Madame's son and ceremonies.

4th July, 1686, Saint-Cloud.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

My son is a little better-looking than his sister and he does not lack intelligence.[1] Still, he isn't as lively as she is, although he is much more reasonable. He loves to ape grown-ups, so the ceremony of the Order quite took his fancy. . . . He does not resemble me at all with regard to ceremonies, but at the same time he does not like them as much as Monsieur does. He was asked lately whether he liked ceremonies and dressing up, and he replied : " I do not hate them as much as Madame does, but neither do I love them nearly as much as does Monsieur."

Madame's advice to bigots.

26th June, 1686, Saint-Cloud.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

I wish from the bottom of my heart that the pious people here (I almost called them bigots) would take your sermon to heart and try to live together in peace and brotherly love, but up to the present that is not at all their idea. On the contrary, they do their best to turn people against each other, husbands against wives, fathers against sons, servants against their masters and so forth, until they have made everyone miserable and discontented. With regard to this one could say, like old Rabenhaupt : " Good-day, sir, you lead us a devil of a life."

There is an old German proverb also of which I am beginning to appreciate the meaning. " Where the devil cannot go himself, he sends an old woman." We members of the Royal Family see the truth of this very clearly. I live as good a life as I can and try to do no harm to anyone, and if I can only figure in the *Mercure Galant*[2] by dint of annoying my neighbours and brethren in Christ, then you will have to wait a long time before you see my name there.

[1] Madame's son, Philippe, was twelve years old at this date.

[2] *Le Mercure Galant* was a review in which social news of all sorts was given. It was founded in 1672 by Danneau de Vizé. Later it became the well-known *Mercure de France*.

Just as Ariosto depicted two Orlandos, one furious and the other amorous, so should the *Mercure Galant* by rights describe the Prince Philip,[1] showing him having an affair of gallantry with Lady Portsmouth[2] after it has told how, single-handed, he overcame all the Turks in the Peloponnese, and other feats of an heroic nature which it attributes to him. The aforesaid lady returned from Brittany in a postchaise a few days ago. Formerly the knights used to post off to see the ladies, but now it is the latter who go posting after the knights. This story will look well in the *Mercure Galant.*

Madame de Maintenon and the Court.

11*th August,* 1686, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

Prince Charles said good-bye to me yesterday evening, and I own that I wept when I saw him go, because I love him heartily and I flatter myself that he does not hate me either . . . Our King is not very well at present, and they say that he may have an attack of quartan fever. Heaven preserve us from that, for it would make him a hundred times more morose than he is already. Indeed, any onlooker at this Court would laugh until the tears came to see how things go on here. The King thinks that he is a saint because he no longer beds with any young woman. His fear of God shows itself in his being niggling and having spies everywhere who bear false witness against anyone and everyone, and also in the way he flatters his brother's minions and generally speaking torments everyone. The old Maintenon[3] woman amuses herself by making the King hate all

[1] Prince Philip of Savoy.

[2] After the death of Charles II in 1685 the Duchess of Portsmouth returned to France to live. Her pension was continued by James II, but was lost some time during his reign or at the Revolution, but Louis XIV, to whom she had always been very useful during her residence in England, kept her creditors at bay, and after his death the Regent continued to subsidise her. She died in 1734.

[3] Madame de Maintenon had had entire charge, secretly, of the King's children by Madame de Montespan, in Vaugirard, since 1670. She was brought to Court in 1673 to relieve Madame de Montespan of the duty of reading to the King. At the time of the Queen's death (1683) Madame de Montespan was still living at Court, but was in disgrace on account of the revelations of her complicity with Voison, the poisoner. In 1685 the King secretly married Madame de Maintenon, but this marriage was never made public.

the members of the Royal Family and bend them to her will. That is, all except Monsieur, and him she praises to the King. She sees that his Majesty gets on well with him and does everything he asks, which is not difficult as you will see later on. Behind it all, however, the old thing is afraid that people will think that she likes Monsieur, so if anyone round the Court speaks to her about him, she abuses him like a pickpocket, says he is good for nothing, the greatest rake in the world, and that he is a babbler and thoroughly false and untrustworthy. The Dauphiness is very unhappy because, although she does everything in her power to please the King, she is daily ill-treated at the old hag's instigation, and spends her life in being bored and bearing children. Her husband, the Dauphin, fears nothing on earth and seeks his pleasure and amusement where he can. He is terribly debauched and Monsieur is as bad. The only thing over which he takes any trouble is trying to put me on bad terms with the King, holding me up to scorn everywhere and recommending his minions, in order to obtain all sorts of advantages and favours for them from the King. As for his children, he never gives them a thought . . .

The old hag has already tried nearly a dozen times to embroil me with the Dauphiness by telling her that she must break with me if she wishes her to reconcile her with the King . . . As for Mademoiselle, the Grande Duchesse and Madame de Guise, she says neither good nor ill of them, but treats them as negligible. Monsieur le Duc grovels before anything that spells favour and is secretly laughed at for his servility. Madame de Maintenon plays with the Princesse de Conti and Madame de Bourbon as if she held them in the scales of a balance. Sometimes she raises one and lowers the other, and sometimes one is high in favour and the other is banished. As I write, Madame de Bourbon is in favour and the Princesse de Conti in disgrace. But the slightest thing may happen and we shall see a change. The actual reason why the Princesse de Conti is in disgrace is that spies told the King that she had mocked at Madame de Maintenon with her cousin, the Duchesse de Choiseul. The Duchess is no better off than the others because her husband tyrannises over her . . .

I would not have dared to write all this to you by the post, as you may imagine, but this opportunity is so good and so safe that I simply had to take advantage of it. If you want more details about the Court, I may inform you that all the ministers

flatter the aforesaid woman, and seek to gain her favour by a thousand servilities. As for the rest, all good people and people of mature age are sad. They have no money, and live in fear of spies, who swarm everywhere. They are unhappy, and yet can do nothing. The younger people in general are terribly debauched, and are addicted to every sort of vice, not excepting lying and deceit. They would consider it shameful to call themselves honourable. In fact, they do nothing but fuddle wallow in venery and talk obscenity.

The death of the Prince de Condé.

31*st December*, 1686, Versailles.

To the Duchess of Hanover.

I heard about a sad thing, which was a letter which the Prince[1] wrote to the King yesterday morning, shortly before his death. (He died yesterday at eight o'clock in the evening.) The poor Prince died as bravely as he had lived. He spoke right up to the last moment, and died with a firmness which passes belief. He said farewell to all his family wiihout shedding a tear, and when he saw their great distress he said, " That is enough. Leave me to meditate for the last time on the other world." Then he gave his attention to his confessor. But when the pain became more violent, he sent for the doctor and asked if it would last much longer. The doctor told him that he would not live to see ten o'clock that night, and the Prince replied firmly, " That is good. I shall at least be done with it soon." He died with the same resolution and firmness. His death is a terrible blow to the Duchess[2] because he was her only consolation. I pity her from the depths of my heart. Everyone is thrown into consternation by this death. A terrible fatality for the princes of the blood seems to reign over Fontainebleau. Last year the Princesse de Conti[3] took small-pox, and that cost her

[1] Louis II, Prince de Condé, known as " The Great Condé."

[2] Louise Françoise de Bourbon, Mademoiselle de Nantes, daughter of the King and Madame de Montespan. She married Louis III, Duc de Bourbon-Condé, and was commonly called Madame la Duchesse.

[3] Marie-Anne de Bourbon, Mademoiselle de Blois, daughter of the King and Mademoiselle de La Vallière. She married Louis-Armand de Bourbon, Prince de Conti, great-nephew of the first Prince de Condé.

husband his life. This year Madame de Bourbon takes the same illness, and that costs the Prince his life; for if he had not watched so assiduously over his grandson's wife, and endured so many fatigues in the tired and weak state in which he has been ever since, he would perhaps be alive still.

CHAPTER V.

1686-1689.

Madame questions whether the King has married Madame de Maintenon.

13*th May*, 1687, Saint-Cloud.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

You are quite mistaken in thinking that my anxiety and the trouble I took during Monsieur's illness have softened him towards me. That is not at all the case, for hardly was he convalescent than I experienced his hatred anew. . . .

You ask whether it is true that the King has married Madame de Maintenon. I really cannot tell you. Most people think so, but I myself will find it hard to believe until it is definitely announced. To judge from what marriages are usually like in this country, their love for each other would not be so strong as it is if they were married, that is, unless the secret adds a flavour which is lacking in the estate of acknowledged wedlock.

Madame's note on a fashion.

10*th June*, 1687, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

I am not in the least surprised that you are still wearing topnuts of ribbon, because everyone here wears them, from little girls up to old ladies of eighty years of age. The only difference is that the young people put on all colours, and the elders only wear black or some other dark colour.

Madame's opinion of the Princes of Lorraine.

27th June, 1687, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

You seem surprised that Madame de Vaudemont's brother should be deranged to such an extent, while she is so rational; it seems to me that it is quite the usual thing for the Princesses of the House of Lorraine to be sound-minded, while the Princes are no earthly good. Madame de Lislebonne and her daughters are virtuous and good-living people, but all the Princes of that house with whom I am acquainted are the wickedest men on earth, caring neither for God nor Man, and having no eyes for anything but vice. Because all their wickedness is countenanced here, they think they can do with impunity whatever enters into their heads.

Madame's opinion of medical treatment.

2nd September, 1687, Saint-Cloud.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

It seems very strange to me to think that the Prince and our Raugrave are in Greece, that country about which we hear in so many plays and romances. I wonder if the Spirit of Poetry will descend upon them while they are so near Parnassus and Helicon? Of all the wonders they have accomplished, that which pleases me best is that—as well as covering themselves with so much honour and glory—they have also managed to come out of it alive. I agree with you that the danger of death at the hands of the doctors is less there than here. His Majesty has had four attacks of fever, but chinchona completely cured him. At present the two eldest children of the Dauphiness, the Duc de Bourgogne and the Duc d'Anjou, are very ill with a fever. This morning they bled one of the youngsters; I don't think it can be a good thing for such little children, for the eldest is only five years old. I don't think Charles-Louis would find it any advantage to marry a French widow and change his religion. They don't care in the least here whether foreigners become Catholic so long as the King's subjects do. . . . As for his taking service in France, I tell you that the King told me positively that he would give no more promotions to

foreigners. So I do not think that Charles-Louis would be able to make a career here.

The maids of honour of the Dauphiness.

28*th October*, 1687, Fontainebleau.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

This evening we are to have an Italian play, but I doubt whether the Dauphiness's maids of honour will be in a mood to laugh at it very heartily, because a few days ago they had an adventure which was not at all pleasant for them. Their governess found a very lewd book in their lodging, every chapter of which was full of indelicacies too horrible to bear thinking about. She took it straightway to Madame de Maintenon's room, where the King was, and handed him the book, begging him at the same time to allow her to retire, as she found it impossible to keep these young girls in check. The King was very angry with them. He found the Dauphiness and showed her the book, saying at the same time that she could do what she liked with her maids, for in future he would have nothing more to do with them. . . . The Dauphiness replied that she was quite aware that one of them was supposed to be the Dauphin's mistress, and another his confidante, while a third spied upon her, and the others were in the habit of discussing her in a very impertinent manner. "I said nothing about it," she added, "because I knew that you and the Dauphin were interested in them. Moreover, I bear no grudge against the one who aspires to be the Dauphin's mistress, because that has not prevented him from living happily with me and showing me every consideration. For this reason I shall defer to him, and decide nothing until I have consulted with him. I shall tell him that I think he should pardon the girls this time, and thus spare their parents the disgrace that would otherwise fall upon them. The latter must, however, be told that they will have to get husbands for their daughters, and when they are married the Dauphin will not engage any more maids." The Dauphin agreed heartily with this arrangement, and it was carried out. I hear that the parents are very angry with the governess, but dare not let their anger be observed, because she is one of Maintenon's creatures. . . . The governess is called Madame de Montchevreuil, and she will draw a pension from the King

and will stay at Court, although she will no longer be the maids' governess. It was Monsieur le Duc who gave them the charming book in question. . . . The six maids of honour are called Laforce, Biron, Gramont, Semeac (these two latter are sisters and are the daughters of the Comte de Gramont), Bellefonds, and Montmorency. They are all from good families, as you see.

Madame and her step-daughters.

13th December, 1687, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

It is not the Queen of Spain's fault that she has no children, but the King's. . . . Although she is not very happy, she is very much more so than her sister, the Duchess of Savoy,[1] whose husband is so queer that I am afraid that he will end by going off his head.

The morals of the French.

20th December, 1687, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

I find La Chetardie's letter very interesting. If our chaste ears might not hear about such things we should have to clear out of France. . . . All the young people and many of the older ones are so steeped in this vice that they talk of nothing else. Any other form of gallantry is ridiculed, and it is only the common men who make love to women.

The fashions of the Court.

26th January, 1688, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

It is true that people are wearing diamond crosses, but they are purely for ornament and have no religious significance. At Court no fichus are worn, but head-dresses grow higher and higher every day. The King told us at table to-day about a hairdresser called Allart, who dressed the ladies' hair so high

[1] Madame's younger step-daughter, Anne-Marie, married in 1684 Victor-Amadée, Prince of Piedmont, and afterwards King of Sardinia and Sicily.

in England that they could not get into their Sedan chairs, so they have had to have their chairs made higher in order to permit them to follow the French fashion.

Marriage projects for Madame's children.

14*th May*, 1688, Saint-Cloud.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

I have been told in confidence that the real reason why the King treats the Marquis d'Effiat and the Chevalier de Lorraine with so much favour is that they have promised to induce Monsieur to ask the King to arrange marriages between his children and those of the Montespan woman. That is to say, my daughter is to wed with that deformity, the Duc du Maine, and my son with Mademoiselle de Blois. The Maintenon is on the side of the Montespan in this case, because it was she who reared the bastards, and she loves that crippled youth as if he were her own son. . . . Imagine, therefore, how I feel at the thought of my only daughter being so badly provided for, when both her sisters are so well married. Even if the Duc du Maine was not the fruit of a double adultery, but a legitimate prince, I should still not desire him for a son-in-law, nor his sister for a daughter-in-law, because he is hideously ugly and deformed, and has many other faults besides. He is as avaricious as the devil, and has a cruel nature. . . . The worst of it is that I dare not speak frankly to Monsieur, because he has the charming habit of going straight to the King, if ever I say anything to him, and repeating it with additions in order to get me into a peck of trouble with him. . . . They say that the Marquis d'Effiat has been promised a dukedom and the Chevalier large sums of money. . . .

This time I shall probably be exiled ; Monsieur talks seriously of it, but that does not keep me from saying what I think, and he will repeat it to the King in his usual way. He will also tell his minions, who, as you can easily guess, will know how to put it before the King in the way most unfavourable to me.

Madame on Madame de Maintenon.

I have not been able to discover whether the King has married Madame de Maintenon or not. Many people maintain that she is his wife, and that they were married by the Archbishop

of Paris in the presence of the King's confessor and of Madame de Maintenon's brother. Others deny this, and it is really impossible to tell which is the truth. One thing, however, is certain, the King never loved any of his mistresses as devotedly as he loves her. It is very amusing to see them together. If she is anywhere about he cannot let a quarter of an hour pass without whispering in her ear, or withdrawing to talk to her in private, and this although he has spent the whole day with her. She is a wicked fiend, feared and fawned upon by all, but not loved by anyone. She practises all sorts of knavery against the worthy Dauphiness, who is the best princess in the world. Frank and noble of character, she does her best to conciliate the Maintenon woman, who keeps her under her thumb in order to make herself more feared, especially by the Dauphiness. Such is the state of the Court nowadays.

I forgot to tell you that in order to hide the fact that the Lorraine crowd are involved in the affair of my daughter's marriage, the Maintenon and Montespan women have put it into the head of the Grande Mademoiselle[1] that since the Duc du Maine is her heir, she should leave him all the rest of her fortune on condition that he marries my daughter. They say that thus her fortune would, in a way, come back to her own family through Monsieur's children. By this means they think to secure everything Mademoiselle possesses, and she, like a

[1]Anne-Marie-Louise d'Orleans, daughter of Gaston d'Orleans, brother of Louis XIII. She was born in 1627 while there was still no direct heir to the throne. She was brought up in Royal style at the Tuileries, and developed into a woman of magnificent physique and determined character, with an inflexible will. The public excitement at the time of her birth (a boy would have been heir to the throne), and the fact that her mother died when she was only a week old, gave her a peculiar hold over the affections of the people of Paris, and during the first Fronde she went freely about Paris while the other members of the Royal family fled the city, and in the second Fronde she joined forces with the Great Condé and led the army in person. Her two most romantic exploits are the throwing open of Orleans to the Frondeurs and the occasion—on 4th July, 1652—when the armies of Condé and Turenne met in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine. Mademoiselle, watching the fight from the tower of the Bastille, saw Condé in danger from Turenne and ordered the cannons of the Bastille to be fired upon the Royal troops, thus giving the day to Condé. For this she was expelled from the Tuileries and sent into exile, until Louis forgave her and allowed her to return to Paris in 1657. Her strongest trait of character was her conviction of the obligations imposed by her rank, and this was her guide in relation to the subject of marriage. Many suitors had approached her and had been rejected, and she was still seeking an alliance with a foreign reigning monarch after having given up all hope of becoming Queen of France. She was a spinster of forty-two when in 1669 she fell in love with the Comte de Lauzun.

fool, Heaven forgive me, is falling into the trap. Moreover, since she was foolish enough to give her wealth to the Bastard in order to get that little toad of a Lauzun[1] out of prison, she wishes us in turn to act as stupidly as she did. . . . In a quarter of an hour I must go to Church to hear the *Tenebræ*. It is quite the most dreary and uninspiring chant in the world.

Madame and the Grande Mademoiselle.

2nd August, 1688, Saint-Cloud.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

I understand that overtures of marriage have been made to the Cripple[2] from the House of Condé. If I were on the same footing with the King as I used to be, and still accompanied him to the chase, I should take care to make him look favourably on the offer, but I am forbidden to go with him anywhere (at the old woman's[3] orders), and if I have anything to say to him I have to request an audience formally. . . . The Grande Mademoiselle has left for Eu, where she will stay two months. I do not know what the King has done to her, but she looks mightily displeased about it. Last Saturday, when I was saying good-bye to her, she tried to tell me something about it, but I played the dullard and made as if I did not understand, because the dear Mademoiselle is not the least bit in the world to be trusted. One day she gushes upon you, and the next she is your enemy. Moreover, she repeats everything, and usually with amplifications, so that under the circumstances I thought it more prudent to keep my mouth shut. In my inmost heart I was secretly rejoiced to see her miserable, and to know that she repents of making the Cripple her heir.

The Dauphin goes to the wars.

26th September, 1688, Saint-Cloud.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

In the meantime the Dauphin has become a warrior, and left here yesterday, as I have already told you, to besiege and

[1] In 1670 the Comte de Lauzun was thrown into prison.

[2] The Duc du Maine married Louise-Benedicte de Bourbon-Condé, grand-daughter of the Great Condé, in 1692. He was crippled, as the result of infantile paralysis, at the age of three.

[3] One of Madame's numerous impolite references to Madame de Maintenon.

capture Philipsburg.[1] After Philipsburg he told me he would take Mannheim and Frankenthal, and fight for my interests, but I said to him, " If you will take my advice, you will not go, because I tell you frankly that it will give me no joy, but only sorrow to know that my name is being used to encompass the ruin of my own unfortunate country." With these words we took leave of each other.

Madame and the war in the Palatinate.

10*th November*, 1688, Fontainebleau.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

It will be long ere I can reconcile myself to the loss of dear Charles-Louis, and what adds still more to my sorrow is to be forced to listen all day long to the preparations for bombarding and burning our beautiful town of Mannheim, which my father, the late Elector, took such a pride in building. My heart bleeds for it, and my sadness is another cause of offence. . . . If you wish to write to Monsieur on behalf of the young Raugraves you can quite well do so, and he will not be offended ; but it will not be of any use, for Monsieur will not open his own purse for them, and he does not receive a liard from the Palatinate. He did, indeed, petition the King to receive the oath of allegiance in his name, but the King would not agree, so he did not take any part in the matter, and at present the King is sole lord of the Palatinate. I am afraid that there is no hope of his Majesty doing anything for the Raugraves. He is not bursting with charity. When I was ill at Paris for ten days he never sent to enquire for me, and when I wrote he did not reply. On my return I was curious to learn what it all meant, so I made some clandestine enquiries, and learnt that the King was vexed with me because of a conversation I had had with the Duc de Montausier. I'll tell you the story. In the Dauphiness's chamber one day Monsieur de Montausier came to me and said, " Madame, the Dauphin is your champion. He is going to win back your lands and property." I made no reply, so he went on, " You seem to take my news very coldly, Madame." " Sir," I replied, " I do indeed hear what you say with indiffer-

[1] French troops invaded Upper Germany in September, 1688, and Philipsburg fell at the end of October.

ence, because you are talking of the one thing in the world about which I have the least desire to hear. I do not see that it will be any great advantage to me to have my fatherland ruined in my name, so that, far from being overjoyed, I am very much hurt. I have no skill in dissembling my feelings, but I know how to hold my tongue, so if people do not want me to say what I think about it, they must refrain from broaching the subject to me." The old man, so they say, was very much annoyed and repeated my words to others, who carried them to the King. In short, the King took the affair very badly, but I cannot help that.

The destruction of the Palatinate.

20th April, 1689, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

If they were to kill me for it, I should still find it impossible not to regret—or, rather, deplore—being made the pretext for my country's destruction. I cannot look on in cold blood while with one blow they destroy poor Mannheim, and with it everything which cost my late father so much trouble and thought. When I think of all the places they have had blown up, I am filled with such horror that each night, just as I am falling asleep, I seem to find myself at Heidelberg or Mannheim, gazing upon the ravages they have committed, then I wake up shuddering and cannot sleep again for two or three hours. I recall these places as they were in my time, and imagine to what a pass they have now been brought. That reminds me of the state my own affairs are in, and I cannot help weeping bitterly. I am especially heartbroken because the King actually stayed his hand from these devastations until after I had craved his leniency for Heidelberg and Mannheim. Then they think it wrong of me to grieve. I expected that you would be sorry to hear of the death of our dear Queen of Spain. I have not been able to realise it yet, and although I follow the example of her late Majesty's nearest and most highly-placed relations, and have begun going to all sorts of amusements again, I always come home as sad as I went, and can find no distraction from my grief. I hear of so many wicked deeds all the time that I am disgusted with life. I agree with you when you say that the dear Queen is now better off than we are, and I should take it

as a kindness if anyone were to render me the service they did to her and her mother, and help me from this world to the next in twenty-four hours.

Madame grieves for the Palatinate.

14*th May*, 1689, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

What really grieves me most is that my name should have been used to deceive the poor inhabitants of the Palatinate, and that these poor harmless creatures should have been led by their affection for my father to believe that the best thing they could do would be to submit with a good grace. They thought that they belonged to me, and would be better off than under the present Elector, since I have the blood of their own kings in my veins. I am heartbroken, and cannot rid myself of the thought that not only were they disappointed in their hopes and their affection harshly rewarded, but that through this same affection they have been brought to the depths of despair and plunged into lifelong misery. . . .

I have noticed one thing, and that is, when the King is afraid that Monsieur will be vexed with him—as, for instance, when he gives important governorships to his bastards and nothing to him—or when he is going to refuse him something for which he has asked, or again, when he leaves him inactive at home, as at present, and won't trust him with a single army corps, nor give him a command or anything else, then he flatters the Lorraine crowd and all the rest of my husband's favourites, and at the same time treats me as badly as he possibly can. Thus, since Monsieur loves these people and hates me, the scales are balanced.

A lady's good name and a duel.

24*th May*, 1689, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

The Princesse de Conti has a young lady of good family amongst her maids of honour called Mademoiselle de Hautefort. The Comte de Brionne, Monsieur le Grand's eldest son, has been in love with her for several years. Her brother, an officer in the

King's bodyguard, who is said to be a very proper young fellow, heard the news lately that Monsieur de Brionne was about to marry and had said certain things about his sister, so yesterday he accosted Monsieur de Brionne in the Dauphin's chamber and requested him to be so obliging as to take a walk with him in the moonlight, as he had something to tell him. Monsieur de Brionne followed him into the courtyard and asked him what he wanted. "Come farther afield," said Hautefort, "I can't tell you here." He took him beyond the lake which lies nearest to Versailles and there he said, "I hear that you are about to marry a wife who is not my sister. She is, however, of too noble a family to be your mistress, and you are speaking evil of her. Therefore you must give me satisfaction, and I insist on fighting you." Monsieur de Brionne replied, "I have never spoken ill of your sister. I loved her, it is true, but she is a virtuous lady and my love can have done her no harm. I never intended to marry her and never made her any such promise, but in order to show you that what I say is the truth, and is not an excuse to avoid a duel with you, I shall give you your satisfaction now, on the spot." Thereupon they drew their swords and set upon each other with a will. Hautefort was wounded in the knee and Monsieur de Brionne had both thighs run through. The King sent to enquire whether it was a serious duel or only a passage of arms, but we don't know yet what the upshot of it will be.

The illness of the Dauphiness.

5th June, 1689, Saint-Cloud.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

The Dauphiness grows weaker every day, and I am afraid that she is sinking rapidly. At first the doctors, wishing to please certain old women who shall be nameless, but whose identity you will easily guess, used to say that she was hypochondriacal and only fancied herself ill, and they allowed the malady to take such a hold of her that now I am afraid no remedy will be of any use. Now that she cannot leave her bed, they are forced to acknowledge that she is really ill, but in their dire ignorance they do nothing but purge, bleed, and clysterise, and nothing of that sort will be of any use to the Dauphiness.

A suspicion of poisoning.

30*th June*, 1689, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

Monsieur de Rebenac is right in thinking that the dear Queen of Spain was poisoned.[1] It was quite evident when they opened her up, and besides she became purple immediately after her death, and they say that that is a sure sign of poisoning. The reason they believe that she was poisoned by oysters is that when one of her maids of honour was about to eat one of them a Spanish grandee rushed up and snatched it from her hand, saying that she would be ill if she ate it. I hear that one of the Princesses Palatine will become Queen of Spain. They have a fine story here that she is in love with Prince Louis of Baden, and so will refuse point-blank to become Queen of Spain.

The Dauphiness and her admirer.

24*th July*, 1689, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

A year ago the Dauphiness called me into her chamber and said, with tears in her eyes, " I have just heard of something which is causing a great scandal at Court. It is said that your cousin, de la Tremouille,[2] is in love with me, and that I should refuse to have anything to do with him ; so will you please ask your cousin not to come to my chamber so often and to show me no more attentions." " Certainly," I replied, " if you wish it I will tell my cousin, but it seems to me that when people come bearing tales like this, you would do better to scold them for taking such a story seriously, and should laugh and take no more notice of the matter, because if my cousin were such a fool as to play the lover, he would only make himself appear ridiculous, and that could not harm you." " But," replied the Dauphiness, " I have been spoken to so seriously about the affair that I have quite made up my mind to refuse him admittance

[1] The Comtesse de Soissons was suspected of having poisoned the Queen. She had fled from France rather than stand her trial on a charge of having poisoned her husband in June, 1673.

[2] The son of Henri-Charles de la Tremouille, Prince de Tarente, and Amelie de Hesse-Cassel, who was a sister of Madame's own mother, Charlotte de Hesse-Cassel.

to my presence." I said to her, "You had much better give up such a foolish idea. Scandal must be avoided before everything, because that is what does the greatest amount of harm. For the last two years they have been saying that this man is in love with you, and yet you have nothing of which to accuse him, except perhaps of looking at you too frequently. So I think that the best thing to do is to ignore and laugh at the affair. It will die out of its own accord, because nothing mends people's behaviour quicker than to find that they are becoming ridiculous." "That may be," said the Dauphiness. "But I beg of you, tell your cousin what I have just said."

I did so, and also gave him a good wigging on my own account for having given grounds for such talk and having brought this reprimand on himself. My cousin replied that he was grieved about the matter, but pleaded not guilty, since he had never been lacking in respect to the Dauphiness either in words or in deeds. He thought that his enemies must have decried him to her, and he said that he would still further prove his respect for her by asking for leave as soon as his term of service with the King should be up, and would go to Germany to stay with his mother. "By this means," he said, "a scandal will be avoided, and, moreover, I shall make my visit last longer than a year, so that all the tales that I have unwittingly given rise to may have time to die down. Only beg the Dauphiness to have patience until then." I took this message back to the Dauphiness, but I forgot to tell you that my cousin had said if she thought it necessary that he should not appear in her presence again, he would sell his commission and retire to his country estate. I told the Dauphiness this as well, and she replied, "All that I ask is that he will come to my chamber only when the King is there, that he should be more discreet than he has been, and should be careful how he looks at me, and, in a word, should treat me with complete indifference." I repeated this to my cousin, and lectured him as well as I could. After that I heard no more of the affair until a fortnight ago, when my cousin came to see me and told me that the Duchesse d'Arpajon, the Dauphiness's lady-in-waiting, had sent for him and had forbidden him, on behalf of the Dauphiness, ever to enter her presence again. As you can imagine, this made a fine stir at Court, and the same evening the Dauphiness said to me, "I believe that you are angry with me because of the order I put upon your cousin?" "I am indeed grieved," I said, "though

not for him, as you might think, but for you because you did not follow the sincere advice that I gave you, and all this talk will do you no good." My words were truer than I thought, and you cannot imagine how much blamed the Dauphiness is by everyone.

Madame fights for her son's virtue.

26*th August*, 1689, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

My enemies have put the idea into Monsieur's head of making his Master of the Horse into his son's Governor. Now it is common knowledge to me and to the whole of France that he is one of the most wicked and depraved men in the world, and on that account I begged Monsieur to appoint some other governor for his son. I urged as my reason that it is not fitting that people should think that my son is one of d'Effiat's "mistresses," since it is well known that there is no more confirmed sodomite in France, and it would be a lamentable thing for a young prince like my son to begin his career with such horrible depravity. To this Monsieur replied, "I must admit the truth, that d'Effiat used to be debauched, and used to make love to boys, but he gave up practising this vice many years ago." I said, "It is only a few years ago since a handsome young German, who was staying here, apologised to me for not coming to see me as often as he would have liked, because d'Effiat pestered him every time he came to the Palais-Royal. So you see that d'Effiat has not been reformed as long as his friends maintain, and even if he has not practised this vice for several years, his mind is still inclined towards it, and I do not think that I should be made to give him my only son in order to test whether my lord groom has forsworn paging. Moreover, there are people who have not heard of d'Effiat's conversion, and they must certainly look upon him as a man who is steeped in vice, and that will give the boy a bad reputation. It seems an unnatural state of affairs that our son should be given as master a rogue who two years ago fathered the child of one of my chambermaids, and who allowed it to be born here in the palace without the slightest consideration for either you or me. . . . d'Effiat is the worst enemy I have in France. . . . I can expect nothing but hatred from my son if he has

such a man for his preceptor. You are my lord and master, and you can put your son into the hands of whomsoever you please, but so long as I live d'Effiat shall never have my approval nor consent. . . ."

Monsieur began to say that Madame de Maintenon heartily approved of the arrangement, and that it was she who had made the King consent to it. "That is indeed a bad omen for you and your son," I broke in, "because she has so great an affection for the Duc du Maine, whom she brought up and loves like her own child, that she would like him to surpass our son in all the virtues. She will, therefore, be delighted to see d'Effiat appointed his master. . . ." When d'Effiat saw that I was so violently opposed to him he began to say that he did not want the charge, then he changed his mind again and began to desire it more keenly than ever. In the meantime Monsieur had told me in a spiteful manner that d'Effiat no longer wished to be governor, and that that was why he was not appointed, and not in the least because of my wishes. I replied with a laugh that by this compliment Monsieur spared me the trouble of thanking him, but that I was so greatly pleased that my son would not fall into the clutches of such a disreputable man that I felt almost inclined to thank not only Monsieur but also d'Effiat himself. That evening I was in high good humour, and was flattering myself that everything was going to turn out well, when Monsieur's confessor was sent to see me, and also, as I was upon the point of leaving for Paris, the Comtesse de Beuvron told me that Monsieur had also sent his chancellor to her to get her to make certain suggestions to me. As their messages were identical, I am going to tell you what they told the chancellor to tell me and what I replied. There was, however, this difference between the messages, that the confessor's was not as brutally worded as the Comtesse de Beuvron's. Did the good Jesuit perhaps use his own discretion and modify the message? I do not know, but I am inclined to think so, because what he told me was at bottom the same as the chancellor's message. By the latter Monsieur informed me that he had definitely made up his mind to appoint d'Effiat governor, whether I consented to it or not, so that I would do well to resign myself to it. If I did so with a good grace, he would give me anything I asked for, and would send for the Comtesse de Beuvron and would treat her well, and, in short, would do anything he could to please me. If, on the other hand, I persisted in saying that the

thing had been done against my wishes, he would still carry it through, but with this difference, that he would make my life a misery, would forbid the Comtesse de Beuvron ever to see me again, would refuse everything for which I might ever ask him, would annoy me in every possible way, and would stir up all sorts of scandals to vex me, and thus would show me that he was master in his own house. . . . I replied that I did not know why Monsieur should resort to bribes and threats, and that he ought to know that when it was a question of something he wished I was always the first to agree without expecting or asking for reward. I said that he should know by this time that I was neither to be bribed nor intimidated, and that when I knew that anything was his will I always accepted it, although I did not approve of it. With regard to the affair which we were discussing at the moment, if it were only a question of my own legitimate grievances against Monsieur d'Effiat, I would readily sacrifice them to Monsieur's wishes, if Monsieur d'Effiat had, on his side, the necessary qualifications for being with my son, thus showing Monsieur how ready I was to obey him. But as my reasons, after leaving my own personal dislike out of the question, were dictated by my conscience and my care for my son's good reputation, I could not sacrifice either the one or the other. Monsieur must, therefore, accept the fact that I would never give my consent to what I thought would mean my son's complete ruin, and that I did not wish my son to be able some day to reproach me with having sacrificed his welfare to my own advantage, and that that was all I had to reply to their specious promises, which I refused with the less regret because on many previous occasions when I had forgiven my enemies similar promises had been made, but they had never been kept. . . . As for Monsieur's shouting from the housetops that he would be master in his own house, he should remember that it was not I who prevented him, and this is so true that it is common knowledge that all the charges in his household are disposed of by the Chevalier de Lorraine, Madame de Grancey, and Monsieur d'Effiat. They are more feared and respected than I am. All the servants who have anything to do with Monsieur are in their pay, and their tyranny extends even to my servants, and no one can enter my employ without first giving them from two to three thousand pistols. . . .

Next day Monsieur sent his chancellor to me, not as the bearer of a message from him, but simply to see whether he could succeed

in persuading me. Chancellor Terat came to me with the suavity which is natural to him, and said, " May I speak to you, Madame, about a matter which is causing such a great deal of discussion, and since no one can be your faithful servant without desiring your happiness, will you be so kind as to allow me to say what I think ? "

" Talk as much as you like," I answered, " but if you do not give me better reasons than those which have already been put before me I shall have nothing to say to you." He thereupon preached me a long sermon, and ended by telling me that I certainly ought to consent to D'Effiat's being made governor, " Because Monsieur is so set upon it." " Indeed, Monsieur Terat," I replied, " after the protestations you have just made me I do not understand how you can advise me to put my son into the hands of the wickedest man in the world. Will you make him generous-minded by giving him as master a very avaricious and self-seeking man ? Monsieur himself used to describe him as that, and cannot deny it. Do you think my son will grow up dutiful with the example before him of d'Effiat, the most debauched of men ? Will you make him truthful by putting him in the hands of a liar, and a malicious liar at that, who has tried to ruin me by his falsehoods, and as a compensation for all the evil I have suffered at d'Effiat's hands, would you have my son become his victim ? There is no justice in that." He said, " Ah, Madame, when you take it like that I do not know how to reply to you, but I beg you to consider that although a man may not himself possess all the virtues, when he is as intelligent as Monsieur d'Effiat is, he will be able to instruct a young prince in them ; and have you not noticed that the most depraved mothers often bring up their daughters to perfection ? Having themselves practised evil, they know the better how to avoid it." I replied, " That is a fine example you give me, and one that I can easily overthrow. A depraved old mother who finishes by playing the prude could do nothing to harm her daughter, but a debauched and vicious master is always in a position to harm his pupil, and I do not want my son to put Monsieur d'Effiat's much vaunted virtue to the test, and if Monsieur would take my advice, he would leave that to others." That is how I got rid of that ambassador. Since then the King has chosen as governor to the Duc de Bourgogne one of the best men in the world. I took the opportunity to write to his Majesty and ask him to be so good as to choose one

for my son, but he sent me no reply either by letter or by word of mouth. Monsieur sulks still, but I go on as usual as if nothing had happened, and I am as polite to him as I know how to be, and every day they send more people to me to try to win me over. I am surprised that Monsieur has not written to you to ask your help, but I expect he does not dare to do that. You probably know that this d'Effiat is universally accused of having given the late Madame the poison which the Chevalier de Lorraine sent from Rome by Morel. This accusation, whether true or false, gives him a fine title to be entrusted with the care of my son.

Madame approaches the King on her son's behalf.

21st September, 1689, Saint-Cloud.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

I must tell you the end of the story. I spoke to the King, and his Majesty said to me, " If they assert that I wish to have d'Effiat bring up my nephew, it is a downright falsehood. On the contrary, I have dissuaded Monsieur from that for a whole year." To this I replied that I humbly begged his Majesty to be good enough to do my son the kindness of choosing a good man for him, and to suggest his choice to Monsieur. The King promised me to do so. . . .

The King has need of Bethune, so it cannot be he, which I regret very much, for I am sure that with him I need never fear that he would make my son hate me, as I am sure I should have had reason to fear if d'Effiat were my son's governor.

The miseries of war.

30th October, 1689, Saint-Cloud.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

Yesterday I was told something which completely melted my heart, and which I wept to hear. They say that the poor inhabitants of Mannheim have all betaken themselves to their cellars, and are living there as if they were houses. They even hold a daily market, as if the town were unscathed as of yore. When any Frenchman comes to Mannheim the poor people crowd around him and ask for news of me. Then they begin

to talk about my father and brother, the late Electors, and weep bitterly, but they do not like the reigning Elector.

The poor Queen of Spain is fortunate in having the consolation of spending some time with her family, because it is certainly the best time she will ever have in all her life. You make me sad when you hold out so little hope of peace. Who knows? Perhaps they will grow tired of war and make an end of it.

CHAPTER VI.

1690—1692.

The Dauphiness again in bad health.

8th February, 1690, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

The poor Dauphiness is now very ill again and is in the hands of a Capuchin called Brother Ange. They say that he has cured the Duc Max de Bavaria and his wife of very serious illnesses. God grant that he may succeed as well here, but unhappily there is not much appearance of that. They are killing her by means of the sorrows they cause her. They tried their best to reduce me to the same state, but I am a tougher nut to crack than the Dauphiness, and before they could finish me the old wives would have broken several teeth!

The death of the Dauphiness.

12th June, 1690, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

It was impossible for me to reply to your second letter while I was at Saint-Cloud. At the funeral of the Dauphiness I wept so profusely for six whole hours that two days later I was still unable to see clearly. The death of the Dauphiness was in itself a great blow to me, because I was very fond of her; but when in addition I saw the arms of our House [1] everywhere, on the coffin and on the black hangings of the church, they recalled the deaths of my father, mother and brother so forcibly that I thought that I should burst with crying. I remembered then

[1] In 1253 the House of Wittelsbach was divided into two branches, the Palatinate and Bavaria. The Dauphiness belonged to the latter branch and Madame to the former.

everything that was dear to me and that I have lost, and I didn't forget either the dear departed Prince Charles who so often used to laugh—God help me!—with the Dauphiness and me. Then as well as all this, the bishop who preached the funeral sermon mentioned the poor Queen of Spain, and that brought back the memory of that bereavement. I think that if the ceremony had lasted any longer I should not have been able to sit it out. I have not yet realised it all and am still overwhelmed, On Wednesday after this dreadful ceremony we went to Marly and stayed there until Saturday. My sorrow should have subsided, because there we took up our ordinary life again. All the rooms were full of gamblers. In the afternoon there was hunting and in the evening music; but to tell you the truth, all this only made me sadder, for on the one hand no one at Marly took any notice of me, and on the other, seeing how soon they forget the dead here, I began to deplore the death of the Dauphiness all over again.

James II and the Battle of the Boyne.

30*th July*, 1690, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

After the King of England[1] had set off in his carriage to return to Saint-Germain, he met one of his footmen about a hundred yards from the gate of the castle, who told him that they were giving out as true, in Ireland, that Marshal Schomberg[2] had fallen in battle, and that the young Prince of Orange had died of his wounds. We have since learnt that what they said of the poor marshal was true, but that the Prince was only slightly wounded. You have no idea with what joy the people heard the news of his death, and although they sent officers to put an end to the tumult, they could not break their way through, and for forty-eight hours the people did nothing but feast and

[1] James II.

[2] Frederic Armand, Duke of Schomberg (1615-1690), was a soldier of fortune who served in Sweden and Holland, and entered the French army in 1650, distinguishing himself under Turenne. He fought in all the campaigns against Condé in 1653-58, and was made a lieutenant-general and Marshal of France. After the revocation of the Edict of Nantes he refused to abjure Protestantism and left France. Eventually he entered the service of William III of England, who sent him to Ireland to fight against James II. He was killed at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690. His sons became naturalized Englishmen.

drink. The Cordeliers lit a large bonfire outside their convent and leapt, sang and danced round it in a ring. The strange thing about that is that absolute though the King's authority is, he could not put an end to it.

The King of England is not very quick-witted, and it is often wise of him to keep his tongue between his teeth ; but I must really repeat to you a conversation that he had with my first gentleman usher. "Sire," asked Monsieur de la Rongère, "what has happened to the Frenchmen who were with your Majesty?" "I have no idea," replied the King. "What!" said de la Rongère, "your Majesty knows nothing about them? Then they cannot have been with you!" "Pardon me," said the King, "let me tell you that the Prince of Orange came up with 40,000 men, and I had only half that number. He had forty cannon and I had only sixteen. I saw that he was throwing out his right wing between me and Dublin, and that he would cut off my retreat and I should not be able to return. So when I saw that, I departed and came back here." "But," said La Rongère, "there is talk of some bridge that your Majesty had not guarded—apparently you had no need of it." "Oh, as for the bridge," said the King, "I had it very well guarded, but they brought up cannon and soldiers against it. It was the cannon that drove away the troops I had stationed there, and the Prince of Orange crossed the bridge."

James II and William of Orange.

August 20th, 1690, Saint-Cloud.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

Here is a list of all the songs that are popular in these days. They are not precisely favourable to our worthy King of England,[1] and you will gather as you read them, that while the people of this country love the King and hate the Prince of Orange, they hold the latter in greater respect. These ditties prove it.

Last Friday the poor King and Queen were here. Her demeanour was very grave, but his was quite gay . . .

I overheard a dialogue in the carriage which amused me very much. Monsieur was talking as usual about his jewels and furniture, and at length said to the King: "And has your

[1] James II.

WILLIAM III.

Majesty, who had such great wealth, not built and furnished some beautiful home?" "Money?" exclaimed the Queen, "he never had any. I never knew him to have a halfpenny." To which the King replied: "I had lots, but I never bought gems or furniture with it. Nor did I build palaces. I spent it all on making great ships and cannons and guns." "Yes," said the Queen, "and a lot of good they did you. Why, they have all been used against you!" There the subject rested. If the prophecy of the previous King of England comes true the worthy King will not even make a good saint. Lady Portsmouth, who was here a few days ago, told me, indeed, that the late King used to say: "You will see that when my brother there becomes King he will lose his kingdoms through his religious zeal and his soul through his unsightly wantons, because he has not even the niceness to like them beautiful!" The prophecy seems to be coming true already, for his kingdoms are lost to him, and one hears that at Dublin he had two frightful scarecrows with whom he was always carrying on. The more one sees of this King the more favourably one feels towards the Prince of Orange, and the more excuses one finds for him. I daresay you think it is a case of returning to one's first love.[1] But one thing is certain: I would rather have this one's intelligence than the other's handsome face . . .

James II and his Queen.

6th September, 1690, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

At Marly I went hunting on horseback, and the dear King[2] and our King[3] followed the chase in a carriage with the Queen of England. I am sure she wishes that her husband may never see any ladies more beautiful than I am! Then her mind will be at rest and she won't be troubled with jealousy, and dear King James won't have his ears boxed. His lackey says that he had two mistresses at Dublin, but here his conduct is beyond reproach. I don't know whether it is from fear of his wife, or just to follow the fashion of these parts and play the saint in every respect, because he certainly goes regularly to hear sermons.

[1] William of Orange was Madame's cousin, and as a girl she had visited at the Court of Holland.

[2] James II.

[3] Louis XIV.

Madame and the Comtesse de Soissons.

10*th September*, 1690, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

As you request, I am telling you exactly what I think about the Comtesse de Soissons.[1] From what I know of her, I should say that she was quite innocent of causing her husband's death. I do not believe that she poisoned him, and I don't think they really believe it of her either, but only pretend to do so in order to frighten her and drive her into doing what she is doing—I mean, to seek flight. For she is feared, because she is very clever and is supposed to be an intriguer . . . Last year when she wrote to me after the death of our dear Queen of Spain, the King forbade me through Monsieur to reply to her . . . I think you will like her all right . . . There are a great many people here who are at least as intriguing as she is and yet they don't send them into exile. Her sister, Madame de Bouillon, is received back into favour, and has permission to return. The four sisters[2] have led a very strange life—never was there a romance more extraordinary.

Madame and her own little religion.

13*th October*, 1690, Saint-Cloud.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

In this country nowadays religion and piety certainly take a strange form. I am not affected by them in the least, and I

[1] Olympe Mancini, niece of the great Cardinal Mazarin. She married in 1657, Eugène de Carignan, a Bourbon prince, whom Mazarin got made Comte de Soissons. Louis appointed her superintendent of the Queen's household, a charge which gave her immense power over the other ladies of the Court. At the height of her power she began to have dealings with the sorcerers, magicians and charlatans of all sorts who preyed upon Paris at that time, and this obsession led to her being sent with her husband into exile at Champagne. The death of her husband there in 1673, and the indifference which she displayed, led to all sorts of rumours, and in 1680 she and her sister, the Duchesse de Bouillon, were accused before the Chambre Ardente of having poisoned their respective husbands. The Duchesse de Bouillon stood her trial and was acquitted, but the Comtesse de Soissons fled from the country. She never returned to France, and died at Brussels in the year 1708.

[2] The four Mancini sisters were Marie, who married the Prince Colonna, High Constable of Naples; Olympe, Comtesse de Soissons; Hortense, Duchesse de Mazarin (see page 187); and Marie-Anne, Duchesse de Bouillon.

am tempted to do like that Englishman called Fielding.[1] Some years ago at Fontainebleau Wendt asked him: "Are you a Huguenot?" "No," said he. "You must be a Catholic, then," said Wendt. "Far from it," replied the Englishman. "Ah," said Wendt, "in that case you must be a Lutheran." "Certainly not," exclaimed Fielding. "What are you, then?" cried Wendt. "I would have you know," said the Englishman, "that I have a little religion all of my own." I think that I, too, will soon have my own private little religion, and it would have behoved King James to have done something of the sort rather than to have lost three kingdoms by his bigotry.

Madame and James II.

20th October, 1690, Fontainebleau.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

Now that I have come to know more of this good King,[2] I like him better. He is the best fellow in the world, and I pity him with all my soul, for he sometimes sighs fit to break your heart. He took me aside once and put me through a veritable catechism to find out whether his daughter, the Princess of Orange, had really taken his misfortune so much to heart that she would not dance when the Electress of Brandenburg visited the Hague . . .

The fashion of poisoning.

5th December, 1690, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

If it be true that Cardinal Azoline poisoned Queen Christine, he richly deserved to die thus miserably. The chambermaid should know the truth, as she was probably a witness of the affair. The fashion of poisoning people is becoming far too common. They say that the poor Infanta of Portugal was sent to her long rest in the same way. There are also stories of the cruel treatment she had to submit to at the hands of the Cardinal.

[1] In a letter dated 25th February, 1706, Madame tells the same story to the Raugravine Louise, but the Englishman is then called Lincoln.

[2] James II.

A present from the King relieves Madame's debts.

7th January, 1691, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

After Vespers the King did me the kindness of sending me two thousand pistols. Although this was eaten up in advance, and I had no advantage of it because I used it to pay old debts, still I was none the less pleased, because it is a sign that I am not so deeply in disgrace this year as last, and secondly that it sustains my credit with those who lend me money to see that I pay my debts . . .

Madame describes her daughter.

29th March, 1691, Paris.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

Will my daughter ever find a husband? God knows! But it seems to me that there is no intention of encouraging the widower [1] to take another wife. Also I see with regret that the King of the Romans is going to marry his aunt. Still, I would rather that my daughter remained a maid all her life than that she should be driven into an unsuitable marriage. She is growing enormously and is almost taller than I am. Her figure is not bad, and she dances and carries herself quite like the Queen of Spain, if you remember her. In face, however, she does not resemble her in the least. Her complexion is beautiful, but her features are ugly. Her nose is plain and her mouth large, her eyes are colourless and her face is flat, as you will see from her portrait.

The sudden death of Monsieur de Louvois.

22nd July, 1691, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

Monsieur de Louvois [2] has been badly served by his habit of drinking water, but I do not know whether it was mineral or plain water which did the mischief. All the doctors and surgeons

[1] The Dauphin.
[2] Louis XIV's Minister of War

who opened him up stated, and put their statement in writing too, that he died of some horrible poison. In a matter of barely a quarter of an hour he passed from perfect health to death. Half-an-hour earlier I met him and spoke to him. He had such a hearty colour and looked so well that I said to him: "The waters of Forges seem to agree with you very well." He very civilly offered to accompany me to my chamber, but I told him that the King was waiting for him, so I could not allow him to do so. If I had allowed him to come he would have died in my room, and that would have been a horrible sight. One of his servants has already been arrested under suspicion of having poisoned a silver mug from which Monsieur de Louvois drank during the afternoon. Since he had to die, I could have wished that it had happened three years ago, then the poor Palatinate would have reaped the advantage of it.

Rumours about De Louvois's death.

23rd August, 1691, Saint-Cloud.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

If it be true that Monsieur de Louvois died of poison, I do not think that it was administered by his sons, bad though they may be. I prefer to think that it was done by some doctor who did the deed in order to please a certain old woman,[1] whom Monsieur de Louvois had seriously displeased, and about whom he used to talk freely when he was accompanying the King to Mons. The King did not appear very much upset about this death—indeed, I have not seen him so gay in a long time.

The Dauphin's fear of Madame de Maintenon.

7th September, 1691, Saint-Cloud.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

The libertine[2] is so much afraid of the great man's[3] old bawd that even if he felt inclined to marry again he would show no sign of it as long as he knew that it was not this dame's wish. It is dreadful how frightened he is of her, considering how old

[1] Madame de Maintenon.
[2] The Dauphin.
[3] Louis XIV.

he is. When he has to face her he trembles like a child before its governess : . . . She paid me a visit at Marly, an event which has not happened for three years, but I greatly fear that it may have something to do with my poor children.

Poisoning and assassination.

18th September, 1691, Fontainebleau.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

Monsieur de Louvois is now so completely forgotten that no one bothers to find out whether he was poisoned or not. I understand that his son, Monsieur de Barbézieux, will soon marry a lady whom his elder brother, Monsieur de Courteneau, should have married. The lady, who is a certain Mademoiselle d'Hussay, preferred the younger son, in which she is quite right, for the elder is stupid and very ugly, whilst Barbézieux is a comely youth and very intelligent to boot. They are both equally rich. Although the elder had appeared amorous at first he immediately gave way to his brother, but since the former poisoned his governor in Rome, I should think that his brother would do well not to sup with him too often. Our great man is incapable of doing such a thing. I know personally and by repute persons who have offered to assassinate the Prince of Orange, but he would never consent to it, although I know well that there are still many who are indiscreetly zealous enough to do it. The Prince of Orange must have a very lofty mind to fear death so little.

Fashions and scandals.

27th December, 1691, Paris.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

I do not know who could have made his Highness the Elector of Brandenbourg believe that people here were wearing aigrettes of diamonds on their hats. Neither young nor old wear them, in fact I have seen no one wearing them except perhaps some dancer at the Opera . . . So I cannot send you any models. But what we often wear is a diamond buckle holding a plume in front, and at the back large diamonds forming a sort of clasp . . .

Probably you have already heard some of the fine scandals

about Monsieur de Mauroy, the Father Superior of the Invalides Mission. The strange thing is the number of women of quality who are mixed up in it. There are nearly a dozen. To one he pays a pension, another has had a present of 20,000 crowns, and to yet another he gave a carriage. This one had her clothes paid for and that one her jewellery. In short, he was very liberal. Monsieur de Louvois thought him a saint, and gave him 10,000 crowns each year to distribute amongst the poor. You know for what purpose he used them, and he ran up debts amounting to 60,000 crowns as well . . . Amongst other things, Monsieur de Mauroy had some artificial beards which were so well made that they could not be distinguished. One day he hired a carriage and told the driver to stop before a certain church. The coachman did so, but he was very much astonished to see an abbot alight instead of a missionary father. Still, he thought he might have been mistaken. Shortly afterwards the abbot returned and had himself driven to a house of which he gave the address . . . When they reached it the driver saw an officer with a scarf, a long wig and a sword get out. This time the coachman was even more astounded. After several hours the supposed officer returned to the carriage and had himself driven to yet another church, and when the driver stopped before it, down came the original missionary with his calotte and the little beard on his chin. Suddenly the driver took it into his head that he had been taking the Devil about. He ran away, shouting to everyone he met: "Alas! I have been driving the Devil about all day!" . . .

I told Monsieur that you were curious to know whether he also was devout. He laughed heartily, and replied: "Tell your aunt that I gloat over my diamonds more than ever, and that I am no more pious than when I had the honour of seeing her. Send her my compliments as well." But between you and me, he is devout all the same, because to be so amuses him. All devotional exercises amuse him, because he loves any sort of ceremony.

The marriage of Madame's son.

21st February, 1692, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

You were misinformed when you were told that I behaved

like a baby about the marriage.[1] I am too old to behave in such a foolish manner. As for my daughter-in-law, I shall not find it hard to get used to her, because we will not find ourselves together often enough to be a thorn in each other's flesh. Most of the time she is in the King's private apartment, which is a sanctum sanctorum where simple mortals like myself do not enter . . . As for the advantages gained by my son, I sincerely hope they may be as brilliant as you have been told, but as they nearly all take the form of promises and expectations, I have not been too much dazzled by the affair. I must confess that I have never been able to understand why Monsieur, who gets on so well with his brother and lives in such submission and agreement, could not make the suggestion that his Majesty should give his only son the wherewithal to live as befits his rank, without forcing him into such an unsuitable marriage . . .

Marriage gossip among the Parisians.

5th March, 1692, Paris.

To the Duchess of Hanover.

Thank Heaven that the marriage of the Duc du Maine is settled and that load is lifted off my heart at last. I think that they must have told the King's old slut what the people of Paris were saying and that it must have frightened her. The common people were openly saying that although it would be shameful for the King to give his bastard to a legitimate Prince of the line, yet they would acquiesce in this marriage, although reluctantly, because my son would give his rank to his wife. But that if the old woman attempted to give my daughter to Monsieur du Maine they would strangle him before the marriage took place, and the old woman, whom they still call his governess, would not be safe herself. As soon as this threat became known, the other marriage with a daughter of the Prince was announced, and this caused great rejoicing in Paris. I am very grateful to the good Parisians for having so bestirred themselves on my behalf.

Now I must tell you some new sayings of Madame de Cornuel

[1] Saint-Simon relates that Madame was so furious with her son for consenting to marry Mademoiselle de Blois, daughter of Louis and Madame de Montespan, that she slapped his face before all the Court in the Gallery at Versailles.

that I have heard. I don't know whether you have heard of this lady: she is more than eighty years old, but she is as sprightly as if she were only twenty-five. It was she who said after she had seen the King of England, "Our King does well to treat the King of England kindly, for he will never be anything but poor man's sauce." When she came to Court recently and saw Madame de Maintenon and Monsieur de Barbézieux, she said: "I have seen the most surprising thing in the world at this Court, love with one foot in the grave and a minister not out of the cradle."

Madame's opinion of William III.

1*st April*, 1692, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

Time alone will show the result of this descent on England, but I for one do not believe that the Prince of Orange will allow the three kingdoms to be snatched back from him as easily as he took them from his father-in-law. . . .

Madame's hopes for her daughter.

12*th April*, 1692, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

Let us hope that by dint of waiting we may eventually catch the Duc de Bourgogne[1]—he wouldn't be at all a bad morsel. You are very kind to admire the bear-cat-monkey visage of my daughter, but her figure is not at all bad . . .

An adventure at the siege of Namur.

31*st May*, 1692, Saint-Cloud.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

I hope that the siege[2] will not last very long, because the town is panic-stricken already. Fifty ladies of quality came on foot with their children and servants to the King's camp. They were taken prisoners of war and were shut up in a convent. It seems to me that these ladies must either have had a very high opinion of the discretion of French soldiers or else they

[1] Eldest son of the Dauphin.
[2] Of Namur.

cared more for their lives than for their honour and their jewels. They had brought away all their diamonds, and were captured by a party of soldiers out foraging. When, however, they promised the soldiers a crown piece each, they led them straight to the King's camp without touching a liard.

Madame is pleased to have news of her son.

4th June, 1692, Saint-Cloud.

To MONSIEUR DE VACOGNES.

I received your letter [1] of May 31st yesterday, Monsieur de Vacognes. God grant that what you tell me about my son is true and not only a prejudice due to your affection for him. You give me great pleasure with the exact reports which you have begun to send me. I beg you to continue them and that you will not take it amiss if I do not reply to all of your letters as I have not always sufficient leisure ; but I shall be none the less obliged to you for the trouble you are taking.

The incompetence of James II.

6th June, 1692, Saint-Cloud

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

Our dear King James is good and honest, but the most incompetent man I have ever seen in my life. A child of seven years would not make such silly mistakes as he does . . . His piety makes him very stupid . . . I would wager my head that our King neither ordered nor countenanced the assassination. He is incapable of doing so, but what makes me think that it was the old woman who planned the affair is that, as I am informed, she told the King that she knew that the Prince of Orange had sent a messenger to Phillippeville to poison the wells . . . You see from this of what she is capable, for the Prince, I am sure, had as much idea of poisoning the wells as I have of hanging myself . . .

[1] This letter is to Adrien-le-Petit, Siegneur de la Terre de Vacognes. The Abbé Dubois had accompanied the Duc de Chartres to the war, and he also wrote frequently to Madame, but she seems to have desired a less interested account of her son's doings than the Abbé would supply. There are eleven letters from Monsieur de Vacognes, covering this campaign of the Duc de Chartres.

The Battle of La Hogue.

8th June, 1692, Paris.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

King William and our soldiers are now very near each other. God grant that it may end without a battle. The Great Man is in bed with an attack of the gout. I expect the news of the naval battle[1] will be but an irritating plaster for his aches and pains. . . . Heaven grant that the land battle may have a less disastrous result than that at sea, or else my son will not come home safe and sound. They say that the poor King of England [2] is returning to-day or to-morrow to Saint-Germain. I pity him with all my heart.

Louis XIV and Madame de Maintenon.

28th June, 1692, Paris.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

As long as King William is not on our side of the Sambre my mind is easy . . . They say that old Slops is in a dreadful temper in the town where her heart's beloved has left her. I hope it will be bad for her health. It is upsetting for her not to have seen him for a whole month, and I am sure that they will both rejoice when the citadel of Namur surrenders and they see each other again. On journeys like these the Great Man lives in the same house as his old slut, but does not sleep in the same room, and a mystery is made of the whole affair. You will understand therefore that he has not yet acknowledged her as his wife. That, however, does not prevent him from shutting himself up with her every day when they are together and keeping the whole Court waiting at the door, the women as well as the men.

If the Duc Rudolphe-August wanted to make such a peculiar marriage, why did he not do like the late Margrave of Baden-Dourlach, who contracted a similar one. His wife was never seen. He kept her shut up in a castle in the country, and though he went there frequently to hunt she never came to Court or to Dourlach, which was a more reasonable arrangement than that made by our Great Man and the Duc Rudolphe-August.

[1] The Battle of La Hogue. [2] James II.

It is quite true that King James made Lord Melfort repeat verbally to our King the contents of the letter which was published in his name but of which he did not write a single word.

The Battle of Steinkirke, at which Madame's son is wounded.

7th August, 1692, Saint-Cloud.

To the Duchess of Hanover.

I must tell you about the bad fright I had last Monday, although, thank God, my terror has now changed to joy. I had already undressed and was preparing for bed at about midnight, when suddenly I heard Monsieur's voice in my ante-chamber. I knew that he had already gone to his room and had in fact got into bed, so I arose in haste and hurried to meet him, to enquire what was the matter. He was holding an open letter in his hand and said: "Don't be alarmed. Our son is wounded, but only slightly. There has been a terrible battle in Flanders[1] and the King's infantry have defeated those of the Prince of Orange. According to the King's message only the bare fact is known yet, and no details have arrived." You can imagine what a state of anguish I was thrown into by this news. I stayed out on my balcony until nearly three o'clock in the morning in case a messenger came from my son. Every half-hour couriers arrived. One brought the news of the death of the Marquis de Bellefonds, another announced that Monsieur de Luxembourg was mortally wounded. The mother of the latter happens to be here, and so is his mother-in-law, Madame de Ventadour, who loves him as if he were her own son. They are lodged just over my room and I can hear their cries . . . At length the next day after dinner a gentleman arrived who was formerly my son's under-governor. His name is La Bertière. He brought the news that my son had received two bullet wounds, one of which tore the cloak on his shoulder to shreds without, by God's mercy, touching him. The other, however, entered his left arm. He extracted it himself and then returned to the field of battle and never left it until all was finished. At first our soldiers gave way, and the English and Dutch leapt over the hedges and ditches and had already captured three cannons before Monsieur de Luxembourg arrived with

[1] The Battle of Steinkirke, August 3rd, 1692.

the Guards regiment, the Prince di Conti, Monsieur le Duc and my son. They rallied the Hussars, whose courage revived, and led them themselves against the enemy. This heartened the soldiers so much that they reversed the fate of the day and drove the enemy so far back through open country that not only did they get back their own cannon, but they took seven from the enemy.

How to discomfit the censor.

18th September, 1692, Saint-Cloud.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

Speaking of letters being opened in the post I must tell you what happened some years ago. The Grande Mademoiselle used to receive many business letters and it was quite plain to see that they had been opened. She replied to them fully and then put at the end: "Since Monsieur de Louvois is very clever and will see this letter before you do, I beg of him when he opens my letters to be good enough to add a word of advice, because my affairs are not going very well." Since then her letters have not been opened . . .

The baptism of the daughter of James II.

24th August, 1692, Versailles.

To MONSIEUR DE VACOGNES.

I am much obliged to you, Monsieur de Vacognes, for the trouble you are taking in sending me all the news about my son,[1] and your letters would give me great pleasure even if I were not as interested as I am in the news from the country in which you find yourself; because you write so clearly . . . Yesterday the King and I stood sponsors for the little Princess of England in the Chapel at Saint-Germain. She was given the name of Louisa-Maria. The Baptismal ceremony was very dignified but also very uncomfortable, because the heat was so terrible that I am sure that it has aggravated the inflammation in my ears, which prevents me from writing to you at greater length.

[1] Madame's son, the Duc de Chartres, had accompanied Louis XIV, who was conducting the siege of Namur in person.

The pictures in Monsieur's room.

7th December, 1692, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

Monsieur's new suite is very handsome. In the farthest chamber he has hung some pictures that are not unknown to you, since they all three came from the gallery at Heidelberg. They are the following: the death of the Blessed Virgin Mary, surrounded by all the Apostles; the picture of Samson slaying the Philistines; and the picture of Prometheus with the vulture gnawing at his entrails . . . There are five great crystal chandeliers in this room . . . and Monsieur gambles there every evening.

CHAPTER VII.

1693—1695.

Robbery and drunkenness in Paris.

1*st February*, 1693, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

In Paris robbery is more rife than ever, and takes various forms. The other day some thieves saw two ladies in a coach with diamond bodkins in their hair. They began to shout, "Stop, ma'am, stop! Your coach-beam is broken and you will have a spill." The coachman stopped and began to look to see what was the matter, and so did the ladies—they put their heads out of the window, and the brigands snatched off their headdresses and decamped. . . . Nowadays it is very fashionable in Paris for the women to get drunk as well as the men, and to do all sorts of disorderly and degrading things. There are at least half-a-dozen who lead this disgraceful sort of life, and they are women of exalted rank. When people tell Madame Cornuel what a shameless life these ladies from the Faubourg Saint-Germain lead, she says, "Good Heavens, you mustn't blame them. They have undertaken a mission to reclaim the young men from the fashionable vice!"

The death of the Grande Mademoiselle.

9*th April*, 1693, Marly.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

Our good Grande Mademoiselle came to the end of her troubles last Sunday, at six o'clock in the evening, and on Monday evening the First President opened her will. Monsieur is the sole heir. She gives the Dauphin her beautiful house at Choisy, and founds many hospitals as well as rewarding all her servants.

That is all there is in the will. Yesterday we went to render her the last honours, that is to say, we went in long cloaks and mantles to sprinkle her with holy water. I could not keep back my tears when I saw the dear Princess lying in her coffin, and remembered how only a week before she was still showing me such affection and kindness. It was only the ignorance of the doctors that caused her death. They did not know what was the matter with her, and scalded her inside so with emetics that the inflammation spread to the bowels, and she died of it. . . .

I must tell you about Lauzun's ludicrous behaviour after this sad event. In order to make out that he had really been married to her, he proposed immediately after her death to a lady, whom, however, he knew very well to be already promised to another and whose marriage contract had been signed by the King. The day after the opening of the will, that is to say, Tuesday, he appeared before the King and the whole Royal Family in a long mantle. After remaining three-quarters of an hour in Monsieur's chamber he departed, only to return in a moment with a large packet bearing six of Mademoiselle's seals on it. He said to Monsieur, " By the way, I forgot to give you this packet, which six years ago Mademoiselle gave Madame de Nogent (that is, his sister), to take care of." Monsieur replied that he could not open the packet, which must be sent to the First President. This packet worried the Dauphin and Monsieur very much, because if it had been another will made six years ago they might not inherit anything, as the will that had been opened immediately after Mademoiselle's death dated from eight years ago, that is to say, from 1685. At midnight Monsieur received word that the will had been opened, but that it dated from 1670. Lauzun doubtless knew this, and must have done it out of malice, which shows what a wicked and ungrateful wretch he is. . . .

An excursion to the armies.

28th June, 1693, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

Madame de Chartres, Madame la Duchesse, and the Princesse de Conti have all three returned from the expedition[1] pregnant,

[1] To Namur. When the King went to visit his armies he was usually accompanied by many members of his family and of the Court circle.

so the King cannot pretend that this journey was a fruitless one. . . .

Monsieur is horribly bored at Vitry. As he was in his youth, so he is to-day, and this winter he has again paid 200,000 crowns charges to the Regiment of Guards in order to reward certain youngsters who have amused him, quite honourably, to be sure, as Master Johannes says.

Madame's sympathy with an old friend in his illness.

27th August, 1693, Colombes.

To MONSIEUR ETIENNE POLIER DE BOTTENS.

I was much alarmed about you, Monsieur de Polier, and did not feel in the least inclined to laugh, because when I heard about your rash I thought that you might have small-pox. I knew that your journey from Paris here on foot would not do you any good. If I had done such a thing I know who would have scolded me, and read me a lecture about health being a precious thing which is not to be abused.

Although you were uncomfortable during your illness, you will now be able to enjoy it, because it is a very pleasant sensation to scratch one's self when one is itchy.

The cruelty of the King and the selfishness of Monsieur.

10th October, 1693, Fontainebleau.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

Madame de Maintenon forces the King to be cruel. Left to himself, he is not so. Formerly he used to be very much annoyed when his troops pillaged the country, but now he boasts that he himself orders every place to be sacked. She makes him so hard-hearted and tyrannical that he no longer has pity for anyone.

As for Monsieur, I have truly done my best to persuade him that I have no desire to interfere with his amusements and with his passion for his men friends, but he persists in thinking that I am trying to prevent his giving all that he possesses to his gallants. Whenever he has made up his mind to give one of them a large present, such as 100,000 francs or 20,000 crowns, he himself stirs up hundreds of quarrels between me

and the King, and makes his fierce hatred for me so very obvious that I fall into disfavour, and have no power to prevent him. When he has no such idea in his head all is peaceful, but these outbreaks occur more than three or four times a year. My son's wife is a wicked and detestable girl. She shows no consideration for my son and despises Monsieur, as if she were someone of importance. . . .

Madame and the pleasures of her childhood.

2nd September, 1694, Saint-Cloud.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUIS.

From all accounts there are a great many visitors at Frankfort just now. I hope that that will be a change for you which you will enjoy. Old though I am, I confess I should like to play once more the little games, and tell the proverbs and stories we used to enjoy when we were young. Since the death of my father I have not danced. The French dances have made me disgusted with it.

The old huntsman.

5th December, 1694, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

The Dauphin has a huntsman called La Violette who is nearly eighty years old. When seen from behind he looks like a stripling of eighteen, so straight does he hold himself. He makes his horse jump all the ditches, however broad they are. He drinks only pure wine and never water, and he will not even sup soup, because there is water in it. Every day he goes to the forest and hunts for ten hours without being unduly tired. . . . I am very glad the satire amused you. Certain people must have found their own portraits too faithfully painted, and have complained, because it has been prescribed. Despréaux[1] only attacks the townspeople in his satires, but Regnard, who wrote this one, strikes at members of the Court. . . .

[1] Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux, commonly called Boileau. Author of *Satires*, *L'Art Poétique*, *Le Lutrin*, etc.

Preaching against play-going.

23rd December, 1694, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

We almost stopped having any more plays, because the Sorbonne, thinking to please the King, tried to have them forbidden. The Archbishop of Paris and Père la Chaise, however, must have told them that it would be too dangerous to interfere with inoffensive amusements, because that would drive young people to various forms of vice. As far as I am concerned, I shall continue to go to plays until they are abolished altogether. . . . A fortnight ago, while we were listening to a sermon against the theatre, in which it was maintained that it aroused the passions, the King turned to me and said, " He is not preaching at me at any rate, because I do not go to the play nowadays, but at you people who are fond of it and go often." I replied, " I am fond of the play to be sure, and often go to it, but Monsieur Dagien is not preaching at me, because he is inveighing only against those who allow their passions to be excited by the plays, and I am not one of those. The only effect they have on me is to amuse me, and there can be no harm in that." The King had nothing to say. . . .

Madame prefers Versailles to Paris.

16th January, 1695, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

In Paris the playhouse is always so full of spectators that they are all mixed up with the actors, which is not very agreeable. There is nothing more tiresome than our evenings at Paris. Monsieur plays Lansquenet at a large table, but he will not let me come near nor look on at the game because he is superstitious, and thinks that it brings him bad luck if he catches sight of me. He insists, nevertheless, on my staying in the same room. I have all the old women who don't play on my hands. This goes on from seven o'clock until ten, and makes me yawn prodigiously. Every other day after dinner I have to go to Port-Royal in accordance with my long-established habit, but I don't go with the same pleasure as I used to, and it has become a penance to me. So you see from this that I cannot

live happily at Paris. Here, on the contrary, I am very contented. If the weather permits, I go hunting. When there is a performance of a comedy I have only to go down a few steps and I am in the great hall. There are no spectators on the stage, so I see the play with all its show, and in addition it costs me nothing. If there is an *appartement* I listen to the music, and afterwards I am not obliged to amuse the old ladies, as I am at Paris.

Louis XIV and Madame's scarf.

3rd February, 1695, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

It is so cold here that we don't know what to do. I thought yesterday at High Mass that my feet would be frozen, and we are not allowed out of respect for the King to have a foot warmer. I had an amusing chat with him. He was rebuking me soundly because I had put on a scarf. "No one ever comes to the procession in a scarf," said he. "Possibly," I replied; "but it has never been as cold as this before." "You used not to wear one," said the King. "I used to be younger and did not feel the cold so much." I replied. "There are women older than you who do not wear scarves," said he. "That is," I replied, "because these old women would rather freeze than wear something that did not suit them; but I would rather be badly dressed than get a chill on my chest, because I care nothing at all for fashion." He dropped the subject then. . . .

Madame de Maintenon, the Dauphin, and Madame's daughter.

6th February, 1695.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

Two years ago the Dauphin intended to marry my daughter, and said so to the old bawd. She did not gainsay him . . . but sent for the Princesse de Conti and her friend Mademoiselle Choin, and instructed them to give the Dauphin no peace until he had promised to give up all idea of this marriage. For two months they never stopped pestering him night or day until at last he gave them the promise. . . .

I hope that she will go to Hell, and may the Father, the Son,

and the Holy Ghost be her guide! That is a quotation from a little Capuchin here, who used to finish his sermons with these words, "You are going to hell-fire, and may the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost be with you, etc.!"

Madame and the behaviour of her son and her husband.

3rd March, 1695, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

I cannot complain as you do that my son is another Cato, and too serious for his age. Although he is really serious by nature and has no great inclination towards debauchery, he gives himself up to it solely in order to copy others, and that is what upsets me most. If it were his nature to love pleasure I should not complain so much about it, but he goes against his own nature when he indulges in vice and vain talk, and at the same time he takes care to hide what good there is in himself. That is what I can hardly endure.

As far as I can see, your young people at Hanover do as ours do. Here no one dances at all these days, but everyone is learning music. It is the height of fashion these days, and the fashion is followed by all the young people of quality, men as well as women.

I could put up with it if Monsieur only squandered his money in gaming, but sometimes he gives away as much as 100,000 francs at one swoop, and all the economies fall on me and the children. That is not at all pleasant, besides putting me in a position where, as God is my witness, if Monsieur were to die, we would have to live entirely on the King's charity, which is a miserable thing. The result is that we have never a liard, and often lack even necessities, and that is very hard. You will see from one of my letters why the story of Madame de Blain's ghost was invented. It is, alas! only too true that dead people do not return. The Prince de Conti promised me faithfully three weeks before his death that if it were possible he would come back and bring me news of the other world, but he has not come. . . .

The Comtesse de Furstenberg's ghost story.

3rd March, 1695.

. . . I have just come away from the dining table, where there were a good many lady visitors, including the Comtesse de Furstenberg, who told me a good story, which I am going to tell you before I reply to your kind letter. We were speaking about solitude, and the Countess told me that she could not bear it. When I asked her why, she said, " Because I am afraid of ghosts." That made me burst out laughing. " I should have thought it funny too," she said, " if I had not seen one myself." I begged her to tell me what she had seen, and this is her tale : " A certain Comte de Ruberta was in love with me, and they were trying to force him to marry a de Furstenberg girl. In order to avoid this marriage he made up his mind to go to the war, but before going he had his horoscope read. It was foretold that if he went to the war, the first shot fired on the field of battle would be for him and would kill him. He came to me, told me about this, and promised that if he were killed he would return to say good-bye. He also asked me if I was not frightened. I replied, ' I would rather see you living than a ghost.' ' Come,' said he, ' give me your hand and tell me that you will not be frightened.' I thought he was only teasing me and gave him my hand. Some time later he went into battle. It was summer time, and I could not sleep, so I got up, and, resting my head on my hands, dropped into a dose. All of a sudden I heard a noise in the corridor as of someone walking in spurred boots. Who can be coming so early ? I asked myself, and, turning my head, saw a figure in brown which disappeared immediately. It was impossible to distinguish the face, but its general appearance was that of Ruberta. When I saw it I started to scream, but as I did so an invisible hand gave me a sharp blow. Then a governess who slept in my room, and had been awakened by the noise, called out, ' Do not be frightened, madam, it is only a ghost. I felt it pulling my foot when I myself woke up.' " This story took my fancy so much that I wanted to share it with you. I forgot to tell you that the first news the Countess received was of the death of Ruberta, and when she asked what clothes he was wearing, they told her that he was clad in brown, just as she had seen

him. It was also discovered that he received his mortal blow at the very moment when his ghost appeared to the Countess.

The death of Queen Mary of England.

5th March, 1695, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

I was sure that Caroline would take Queen Mary's[1] death very much to heart. All those who knew the Queen sing her praises. King James of England, who is here with us, does not wish us to wear mourning for his daughter. He insisted very strongly on our not doing it. He showed no signs of sorrow at her death, which surprised me very much, because I cannot understand how one can forget one's children, however wickedly they have behaved towards one. The call of the blood must make itself heard. From the description you gave me of King William, I should never in my life have imagined that he would be so devoted to his wife. I admire him very much for it, and pity him from the bottom of my heart. If I had been allowed to, I should have written to Caroline[2] to condole with her. . . . It has been so cold here that at the King's table the wine as well as the water freezes in the glasses. . . .

A play gets a bad reception.

May 1st, 1695, Paris.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

I imagine that since the Court has become so devout the authors must have thought that their play would have a better reception if they flavoured it with a little piety. At first the piece[3] was successful, but we simply cannot stand it any longer. When the actors announced the last performance, the groundlings of the pit shouted out, "We don't want any more!" "How so?" they were asked, "the play has been well received." From the pit came the reply, "The only reason the play was not

[1] Queen Mary of England, Consort of William III.

[2] Caroline, the youngest of Madame's half-sisters, had married the son of the Duke of Schomberg and lived in England.

[3] "Judith," a tragedy, by l'Abbé Boyer; and the reply was made to Marie Champmêles, the great tragic actress.

hissed is that it was produced in Lent, and all the experts were busy at Versailles booing the sermons of Parson Boileau!" I think that was quite an apt retort.

Dancing and gambling at the French Court.

14th May, 1695, Paris.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

Is dancing, then, quite out of fashion everywhere? Here in France, in our circle, whenever there is a party, people begin to play Lansquenet, which is the most fashionable game at present. The young people do not dance any more, and as far as I am concerned, I neither dance nor play. I have two very good reasons for having nothing to do with gaming. First, I have no money, and second, I don't like gambling. They play for very high stakes here, and people behave as if they were mad. One weeps, while another bangs on the table with his fist until the whole room shakes. Another blasphemes until your hair stands on end. In fact, they all seem to have lost their senses. One look at them is enough to frighten me. . . .

At Paris the weather is hardly ever fine, but in spite of it I go out driving as often as I can, and as well I have been out stag-hunting twice. Probably you will say that I am too old to go to the chase, and I heartily agree with you, but I would rather be ridiculous than ill, and there is no better cure for the pains in my spleen than hunting and violent exercise. So I shall blatantly continue my hunting.

Madame and her devotions.

7th July, 1695, Saint-Cloud.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

In my opinion, Monsieur is devout in order to model himself in every respect on Henry III. If that is the way to Heaven, I am sure that I shall never reach it, because I find it impossible to sit through High Mass. My devotions are soon over, because I have a chaplain who can get through Mass in a quarter of an hour.

The gardens of Meudon.

17th July, 1695, Saint-Cloud.

To the Duchess of Hanover.

These gardens are certainly beautiful, but Madame de Bouillon thinks that there are still more charming gardens in Italy. She says that they are embellished with numbers of beautiful old statues. Although Meudon is undeniably lovely, I must confess that I like Choisy much better. It is not so pretentious as Meudon, but I consider it far gayer. The Seine flows by like a canal not a dozen steps from the house, which I think very attractive, and the ground is all on one level, so there is no climbing to do as there is at Meudon, and that suits me better. I was to the Duc de Simmern, like Cliton in *Le Menteur*, "*De son cœur l' unique secretaire et de tous ses secrets le grande depositaire.*" The worthy duke thought that he was the only person who knew of his wife's liking for Monsieur Kolb, and he imagined that he could win her back by kindness. On the other hand, he himself was very fond of Kolb, and couldn't get on without him, and he believed also that Kolb treated his wife cruelly. When I saw how completely Kolb had taken in his master I did not try to undeceive him. . . .

A pretty little dog is all very well for an amusement, but not to console oneself with. I do not like Boulognes, because they are too delicate. I much prefer French spaniels. I have usually four of them at my heels and at night they sleep beside me.

The Elector of Saxony was following an entirely French fashion when he handed the towel to the King of the Romans, because Monsieur gives it to the Dauphin. If the Dauphin had a brother it would be the brother's place to hand it to him. The King started this custom in the days of the late Duc d'Anjou, so Monsieur has nothing to say against it. I agree with you, however, that my late papa would not have handed the towel to the King of the Romans. . . .

Madame, her visitors, and the profession of arms.

17th September, 1695, Saint-Cloud.

To the Raugravine Louise.

Before replying to your letter, let me give you a list of all the visitors I have had since it reached me. First of all, there

arrived a perfect swarm of duchesses, because to-day I was going to give an audience to the wife of the Venetian Ambassador. Then there was the audience itself, which did not last very long because everything passed off smoothly and ceremoniously. Then, when the audience was finished, the Dauphin came with the Princesse de Conti. When they had gone, along came the Duchesse de Brasciano[1] to take leave before going to Rome. Then the worthy Madame de Klenk came to my room, and she had just gone when the Comptroller of my Household came to discuss some business. . . .

I told you last time I wrote that my son has now returned, but the joy of seeing him again was a little spoilt because he has again had two attacks of tertian fever. That was why I stopped his chinchona entirely. To-day, thank God, the third attack did not take place. . . . It is true that my son loves the profession of arms, and all those who saw him at the war acknowledge that he is very much interested in it, and studies his profession with great diligence, but I don't feel at all comfortable about it, because at that profession arms and legs are often lost, to say nothing of lives. . . .

The Duc de Villeroi and the capture of Namur.

27th September, 1695, Fontainebleau.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

People are indeed unjust to the poor Duc de Villeroi.[2] My son says so too, but when the French take it into their heads to hate anyone they lose all rhyme and reason, and have to blurt out whatever comes into their heads. They make out that everyone in Namur[3] behaved very well, and they are all being rewarded. If they had had provisions they would have held out longer. I was not at Court when the news arrived that

[1] Afterwards known as the Princesse des Ursins.

[2] François de Villeroi, Marshal of France. His long military career was not very successful. "He was a man fit only to preside at a ball or to be the judge at a carousal, or, if he had had a suitable voice, to sing the parts of kings and heroes in opera. Very suitable to set the fashion, but no good for anything else . . . He was a courageous man; as for his military skill, we have seen the disastrous results of it."—Saint-Simon.

[3] Namur had been captured by the French in 1692, and was recaptured by William III in 1695.

the Prince of Orange had kept Boufflers[1] prisoner, but people who were there have told me that at first the King turned white and trembled with rage. The next day, however, he is supposed to have said, "The Prince of Orange is right, because if my commands had been promptly obeyed this would not have happened, and the garrison at Dixmude would have been relieved immediately."

Monsieur de Boufflers is not being treated with any more respect than the Maréchal de Villeroi, as you will see from the enclosed ballads. . . .

The Abbess and the young servant.

27th September, 1695, Fontainebleau.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISE.

My aunt has told me some queer tales about the Abbesse d'Herford,[2] and in addition we have a Courlander serving here who pretends to be very much in favour with this abbess. He has shown me a letter from her which shows that she takes a great interest in him. His name is Ambotten. It was also she who had him so strongly recommended to me by Madame de Palatine. He is a youth of twenty years of age, neither ugly nor badly built, but not at all attractive. He is intelligent and writes well, but is very much taken up with himself. She would like to have him back with her, but Ambotten does not want to return to her. So you can see, my dear Louise, that I have heard lots of gossip about the character of this abbess.

I have not seen the verses which were sent from England to the Princesse de Conti. The poetic art will now be exercised in every language on the subject of Namur. Here everyone is made a song of, even the King, but the particular butt is the poor Duc de Villeroi. Never a day passes without another lampoon against him.

[1] Louis-François, Duc de Boufflers, Marshal of France. "Of unstained honour, and open-handed generosity, he was noble-minded in all his actions, and his goodness shone forth, true and sincere, in the whole conduct of his life."—Saint-Simon.

[2] Elisabeth, Countess Palatine, sister of Sophia, Duchess of Hanover.

Gossip and praise of William III.

12th October, 1695, Fontainebleau.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

I hope that the Elector of Brandenburg [1] will make a long stay at Loo with King William, or rather that the fine sights he is sure to see at Amsterdam will keep him there a long time, so that you can have his wife with you a little longer. People say that he wants to marry his Princess Electoral to King William.

Be kind enough, I beg you, to remember me to my god-daughter, so that she will not forget me. I love and admired her with all my heart. King William is spoken of in quite a different manner these days. On all sides one hears, " He is a great man, and as great a king as he deserves to be," and so forth. You are quite right when you say that it is the successful people who get all the praise. I myself am not the least bit in the world ambitious, and I cannot understand why people should strive after anything which costs such a lot of trouble, for I am sure that during the siege of Namur King William rested neither night nor day. You need not be surprised at the way he is being praised to the skies. Everything is a matter of fashion here, and for a year past everyone has been discussed with far too much frankness. Exalted social position will not stop tongues wagging, since crowned heads are the most criticised, and are the favourite butts for the rhymesters. I laughed when I read what you said about the *château de derrière*. It is true that King William is supposed by people here to belong to that confraternity, but they say that he is not so much taken up with it as he used to be. . . .

Madame and a song of the day.

18th October, 1695, Fontainebleau.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISE.

It is very kind of you thus to share my pleasure in my son's return. He has been ill for some time now, but since coming here he has cured himself by playing pall mall and hunting, and

[1] Later Frederick I of Prussia. His wife was Sophia-Charlotte, daughter of the Duchess of Hanover, and Madame's god-daughter.

is now perfectly well, thank God. It goes without saying that Maréchal de Boufflers has also been satirised in Paris. Here is a song about him sung to the air of the Joconde :—

Quoy Bouffler duc on a grang tord,
C'est insulter la France ;
Guillaume l'aurait fait milord,
C'est sa vray recompense, etc.

You see they make a song of everything here. When you talk to me about your figure and say that it is past its best, you forget that I am ten years older than you are. It doesn't become me to criticise other people's faces, nor would I dislike anyone because of his beauty or ugliness. Let us agree with Jodelet in saying : *" Maistre Valet, si nous estions artissans de nous mesmes, on ne verrait partout que des beautes extremes."*[1]

Madame keeps herself in touch with German.

30*th October*, 1695, Paris.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISE.

I must thank you for the two Virgils which at length reached me yesterday, although they are not the ones I read before—those ones belonged to Charles-Louis, and were, as I told you, in blank verse ; they are none the less acceptable because they come to me from you. I shall read them, my dear Louise, to keep myself in touch with the German language, so that I shall not forget it. They will, therefore, not be useless to me. . . .

The titles of the Royal Family.

1*st December*, 1695, Marly.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISE.

Monsieur Fabricius writes to me that he intends to take a trip to Saint-Cloud if peace is declared. I have no time to-day to reply to his letter, but please thank him for it, and tell him that I shall be very much pleased to see him at Saint-Cloud. Between ourselves, if he comes here he must not call me Your Highness. That title is all right for the Princes of the Blood,

[1] From *Le Jodelet, ou le Maitre Valet*, a comedy by Scarron.

but we and our children are called Your Royal Highness. No one else in France is addressed thus except the grandchildren of the King of France. . . .

The Queen of England and a letter.

18*th December*, 1695, Port-Royal.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

I thank you very much for Monsieur Leibnitz's[1] printed letter. I think it is very well written, and don't know how he was able to explain such a complicated matter so clearly. I am sure I shall give the Queen of England great pleasure when I show it to her. I shall certainly give it to her Majesty to read when I see her.

[1] Gottfried Wilhelm Leibnitz, the great philosopher, who owed much to the friendship of the Electress Sophia and her daughter.

CHAPTER VIII.

1696.

Madame and her portraits.

1*st January*, 1696, Versailles.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISE.

Lasalle the courier would have obliged me very much if he had brought me your portraits. I shall try to find out whither the rascal has betaken himself. I am sending you the one of myself dressed in hunting garb, because it is like me, or, I should say, more like me than the others. Since I have had small-pox I have had no portraits of myself painted, because I have become even uglier than before . . .

Madame routs the pretensions of the Chevalier de Bouillon.

5*th January*, 1696, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

During the two days that I spent at Paris, two different people called who each asked if I knew the stories that were being spread about me. The Chevalier de Bouillon seems to have announced publicly at the play and at the opera that I was enamoured of him, and he said it so insolently that no one dared to repeat his words to me. I replied that nothing the Chevalier de Bouillon said could hurt anyone, because he is such a drunkard and liar that no one would attach any importance to his tales. But I said that if he persisted in this folly I would cover him with such ridicule that it would stick to him all his life. After that I saw no more of the Chevalier de Bouillon, and I thought no more about him until last Monday when, as I was coming in to watch the play here, I saw some young fellows looking at me and signing to the Chevalier with derisive

smiles. This roused my anger. They were just using the word *apostrophize* in the play and I said loudly to the Dauphin: "There is a man up there that I apostrophise." "Who is that?" asked the Dauphin. "The Chevalier de Bouillon," I replied, "because I hear on every hand that I have a great passion for him, and since I have not noticed them myself, I should like to ask him what the great and beautiful qualities are which have so much charmed me. Then if he continues to be so fatuous in his talk I shall be forced to beg the King to send away this flame which is reducing my heart to ashes," I laughed. The Dauphin immediately ordered my son to warn the Chevalier de Bouillon that he must never again show himself any place where I was. That same evening his father, Monsieur de Bouillon, came to me and made a great palaver about the sorrow it gave him to hear that his son had been falsely accused to me. He asked me to give him the names of the people who had informed me, and said that if they were men his son would fight them, and that if they were women he would slit their noses for them. I began to laugh and said: "The King has forbidden every sort of duel, but your son would be hard put to it to fight all those who have heard his impertinences at the play and at the opera." "But," replied Monsieur de Bouillon, "what makes you think that my son is capable of committing such an impertinence?" I replied: "There are two reasons. The first is his insolent behaviour to my cousin, the Duchess of Hanover." "Ah, Madame," he interrupted, "there is a great difference." "It is not as great as you think," I replied, "and if you had corrected him then, this would not have happened to him. The second reason which makes me believe what I was told about your son is that he is a drunkard, and I have seen him so drunk at Fontainebleau that at the chase he called you an old fool in my presence, and anyone who is capable of those two follies is capable of anything." "Ah, if I had heard him I would have run him through with my sword," said Monsieur de Bouillon. "You had only to do it," I replied, "because you were nearer to him than I was when I heard him say it." "Very well, Madame," said he, "since you are convinced of my son's guilt, what do you wish me to do with him? Shall I send him to the Bastille? Shall I throw him into a dungeon, or shall I beat him to death?" "It is your business, not mine," I replied, "to decide how you can reform your son. What he said about me is beneath my notice, but in order to put a stop to his

MEDAL OF MADAME,
by the artist Le Blanc; the reverse shows an orange tree growing from a pot on which are the arms of Orleans and the Palatinate.
(*Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.*)

MEDAL OF MADAME,
by M. Rög; the reverse refers to the foundation of a church at Bagnols by her daughter-in-law.
(*Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.*)

insolent behaviour I had to treat him according to his deserts and hold him up to public ridicule, so that other drunkards may learn not to talk about me in their cups. I am much obliged to you, however, for having felt so strongly about the affair." To this he replied: "I shall beg the King to make you say who told you about it." "The King," I retorted, "has too much respect for me to force me to tell what I do not want, and, moreover, I advise you to say nothing to the King, because he might easily aggravate the affair, and if he took a serious view of the matter he would punish your son even more severely than you would. Take my advice and correct him yourself, then nothing more will be said about the affair." Shortly afterwards Monsieur came in and I told him everything that had happened. That evening and the next day he showed his approval of everything I had done, but to-day I found him in quite another mind, and he says that I did very wrong in publicly insulting the Chevalier. "Would you rather, Monsieur," I replied, "have the story which he spread going round—to the effect that I am in love with him and ogle him?" "Not at all," replied Monsieur, "but only half the Court approves what you have done." "So much the better," I said; "those who disapprove must be the young friends of the Chevalier de Bouillon, and I did it on purpose, because I know that men of their sort fear nothing so much in the world as being lectured, and I wanted to give them such a scare that they will not talk about me any more, because I do not desire to be either lampooned or sung about as the Princess was. In order, therefore, to be spared their insolence in the future, I showed them that I shall not hold my tongue if they play such tricks with me." Monsieur replied: "That is all right. We won't mention it again."

To-day the Cardinal de Bouillon came to see me and paid me many compliments, to which I replied politely.

The celebration of a jubilee.

1*st March*, 1696, Marly.

To the Duchess of Hanover.

We are soon going to enter upon a life of boredom here, because there is to be a Jubilee. The affair is very badly named, because nothing could be more dismal. We shall be continually shut up in churches, eat a great deal of fish, fast, and communicate.

Moreover, while it lasts there are no amusements, plays or operas. In short, everything is tiresome. King James will celebrate the Jubilee at sea, because his Majesty left yesterday for Calais, whence he will embark with an army for England.[1] To what it will lead, *sal den tied leren.*[2]

Madame's domestic sorrows.

7th March, 1696, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

To begin my story with Monsieur, he cares for nothing but his young friends, and spends whole nights eating and drinking with them. He also gives them enormous sums of money. Where they are concerned nothing matters and nothing is too costly, although at the same time the children and I have scarcely the necessities of life. When I need chemises and sheets I have to beg for them for a very long time, but he gives La Carte ten[3] thousand crowns to buy his linenin Flanders . . . He embroils me with the King to such an extent that I can never remain on good terms with his Majesty. Day by day he stirs up my own children against me, and, for fear my son should notice how little care is taken of him, he allows him to indulge in all sorts of debauchery and even encourage him in it, although he knows that by so doing he is rendering him odious to the King. . . . They both lead a shameful life in Paris, but in spite of everything, my son's inclinations are good, and something fine could be made of him if Monsieur did not corrupt him. Thank God, Monsieur does not entangle my daughter in any of his debaucheries, nor has she the slightest inclination towards gallantry, but Monsieur will not leave her in my charge. He always takes her away from me and forces her to associate with such riff-raff that it is indeed a miracle that she is not depraved. Moreover, he fills her mind with such a hatred of

[1] This was King Louis' last effort to help James II to regain his throne. French transports were in waiting at Calais to embark James with an expeditionary force to invade England, but at Calais he was met by the news of the failure of the " assassination plot " and the Duke of Berwick's inability to raise an insurrection in England, and the attempt was given up.

[2] " Time will show." Madame occasionally used Dutch expressions and understood that language.

[3] Captain of Monsieur's Guards and one of his favourites. According to Saint-Simon, Monsieur provided the money for him to marry the daughter of the Duc de la Ferté, whose name he took with the title of Marquis.

Germans that she can hardly bear to be with me because I am a German. This makes me afraid that what happened to my son may happen to her, and that one of these days she may allow herself to be persuaded to accept the Bastard. Before the world Monsieur pretends to be on good terms with me, but really he cannot bear me . . . He tries his best to make me hated not only by the King but by the Dauphin and every one else, and even does so in my very presence, and if I say to him: "Why do you want to make me detested, Monsieur?" he does not reply but only shakes his head and laughs. In spite of it all I behave as well as possible and am very polite to him, showing him great respect and doing everything he wishes me to. You can imagine, however, that all this does not make my life happy or agreeable.

With regard to the Maintenon woman, she is so jealous of her authority that Monsieur gives her great pleasure when he speaks evil of me to the King. Several times she has tried to turn me against Monsieur, and has often told me that he grumbles to the King about me very frequently . . . You cannot imagine what a wicked devil this old woman is and how she tries to set people against each other. She is more polite to me nowadays, but you must not think from that that she ever renders me the slightest service. At heart she detests me, and the King does everything she wants blindly.

My son's wife is a disgusting creature who gets as drunk as a fiddler three or four times a week. She has no affection for me, and if I go anywhere with her I cannot get one word out of her. It is the Maintenon who has made her so suspicious of me. For the rest, the King prefers all his bastards to me, and when we go anywhere with him, it is for the Princesses that the ladies are sent for. They are all received in the King's private circle, and every evening I have to watch Madame de Chartres go into the King's *cabinet* while the door is shut in my face . . .

Monsieur has had all the silver which came from the Palatinate melted and sold and has given the money to his minions. Every day new favourites are brought to him and he sells and pawns all his jewels in order to make them presents, and, as God is my witness, if Monsieur were to die to-day I should be dependent to-morrow on the favour of the King and would find myself without my daily bread. Monsieur says publicly, and does not try to hide it from either his daughter or me, that he is getting old and has no time to lose, and that he does not intend to save

anything, but will use everything in order to amuse himself to the end . . . and he acts as he talks . . .

In order to take my mind off these sorry thoughts I hunt as often as possible, but soon my poor horses will no longer be able to continue, for Monsieur has never bought me any new ones, and it is quite certain that he will not do so now. Hitherto the King has given them to me, but times are hard now. It is not of the times, however, that I complain, but because it is impossible to have any peace here . . . The young people have such brutal manners that they frighten one, and I can neither talk to them nor remain in their company. As for the elders, they are very scheming and will only associate with those upon whom the King smiles . . .

Madame's medical treatment is better than that of the physicians.

25*th March*, 1696, Versailles.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

I have begun Lent sadly, because the good Duchesse de Guise, cousin to Monsieur and the King and daughter of the late Monsieur, has died here in our neighbourhood after five days illness, and I feel her loss very keenly. She was a good and pious Princess and we used to have our meals together every day, because there is only an ante-chamber between my room and her cabinet, so I saw her right up to the end . . . She foretold her death and knew quite well that she was going to die just now, but she did not say so. At the moment when she fell ill my son was much more ill than she was. He had a continuous high fever with convulsions, his chest pained him and he had a bad cough. But I would not let them give him any medicines, because I knew that his illness only arose from the irregular life that he had been leading at Paris during the Carnival. So I made him keep himself very warm, feed himself well and drink water to refresh himself, and on this treatment he got better after five days, while poor Madame de Guise, who was bled six times during her illness, is dead. . . .

Ridicule of James II, and a conspiracy against William III.

1st *April*, 1696, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

The French cannot lose the habit of mocking at people. They have to ridicule everything they hear. King James has not come back, and they have made up their minds that there is nothing more to be done, so they have placarded this in Paris: "One hundred crowns reward for anyone who can find an honourable excuse to bring the King of England back to Saint-Germains." The idea of this struck me as so comical that I could not help laughing at it, although I feel a lively compassion for the poor King.

Everything has now been discovered, and I do not think that King William will be exposed to any more danger for a long time. Suicides are very common amongst the English, and our Queen told me that during all the time she spent in that country not a single day passed without some man or woman hanging, or stabbing himself, or blowing out his brains. I have already told you that no one believes in the Assassination Plot here.[1] They maintain that it is an invention of King William's to soften the English and win them over to his cause. The King is supposed to have said: "The Prince of Orange will do me the justice of refusing to believe that I tried to have him assassinated, because he knows very well that I have kept certain persons in prison for two years for having merely proposed to me that I should assassinate him." You will see from that that our King had nothing to do with it. Probably the conspirators arranged the affair among themselves, or perhaps the Duke of Berwick,[2] who is a little bit inclined to be brutal, thought of the idea and proposed it in the name of the two Kings, but unknown to them, because from what I gather they are not very well pleased with the Duke here . . .

[1] The plot to assassinate William III was betrayed on 24th February, 1696, by one of its members turning King's evidence.

[2] James Fitz-James, Duke of Berwick (1660-1734), Marshal of France, illegitimate son of James II and Arabella Churchill, sister of the Duke of Marlborough. He spent his childhood in France and later fought in Hungary under the Duc de Lorraine (Charles). After the exile of the Stuarts to Saint-Germain he became a naturalized French subject (1703). The rest of his life was spent with the armies of Louis XIV and he had many successes. He was killed at the siege of Philipsburg in 1734.

Madame and her daughter's portrait.

8th April, 1696, Versailles.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

A very disagreeable thing has happened to me. I had had my portrait painted for Caroline and had ordered one of my daughter to be done by a good painter, who promised to do it for me. When I thought that it should be ready I sent to his house for it, but he sent back word that he had not done the portrait, because he had done one for Monsieur and had not been paid by him, so he thought that I would not pay either, and consequently had refrained from painting it. Now I must set about finding another painter in order to have my daughter's portrait.

The Comte de Grammont and the story of the Passion.

24th April, 1696, Paris.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

The story which you tell of that Dutchman reminds me of one about the Comte de Grammont. Two years ago, when he was lying at death's door, they read the Passion to him. In all his life he had never heard the story in French and he did not recognise it. When they reached the place where the Apostles abandoned Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Comte de Grammont began to weep and cried out: "The traitors! Why, oh why did he take thieves for his followers, and common people like fishermen? What was he thinking of not to have himself followed by Gascon gentlemen? They would never have abandoned him nor betrayed him." Then he called his wife to him and asked: "Countess, is everything that they have been reading to me really true?" The Comtesse de Grammont told me this story herself and I have asked the Count if it was true. He said that it was.

The good intentions of King William III.

13th May, 1696, Versailles.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

It would seem that King William is not cruel after all, because he saw to it himself that his father-in-law was able to escape

with all his family. He does not seem to wish any harm to the Duke of Berwick, because of the great likeness he bears to his own late wife. Our Queen of England here has a portrait of her late step-daughter, and when she showed it to me I thought that it was the Duke of Berwick in women's clothes. As a matter of fact, they were near enough relations to resemble each other. People here are all well aware by now that King William is a good-hearted man, but I always had reason to believe so.

Madame does not understand James II.

3rd June, 1696, Saint-Cloud.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

King James himself says that if they [1] had been in Holland instead of invading the Palatinate he would now be on his throne again, because I discussed the matter with him once. But there is one thing that I have never been able to understand, and one I have never dared to ask him, and that is why he did not use the thirty thousand pistols which he had in his chamber in England in doing good and attaching the hearts of his subjects to himself, so that they would remain faithful to him, and why also he did not bring away this money instead of leaving it behind in his chamber. That seems to me dreadfully stupid.

Louis XIV and religion.

16th June, 1696, Marly.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

The Great Man is incredibly simple with regard to religious matters, but not at all so where other matters are concerned. This arises from the fact that he has never learnt anything about religion, has never read the Bible, and thoroughly believes everything they tell him on this subject. Moreover, when he had a mistress who was not pious he was not pious either. Now that he has fallen in love with a woman who talks of nothing but penitence [2] he believes everything she tells him to such an

[1] The French armies.
[2] Madame de Maintenon.

extent that his confessor and the lady are often at variance, because he believes the woman rather than the confessor. He won't, however, take the trouble to find out for himself what real religion means.

Madame's son has a lucky escape.

18*th June*, 1696, Marly.

To the Duc de Chartres.

I spent three hours stag-hunting yesterday, my son, but the news which I heard on returning, or at least on getting up from the table, has not done much to improve my health. You are under a great debt to the King, and if you do not recognise the fact it will be very wrong of you. He has taken the trouble to prevent your letters to one of your cherished associates, who will probably be burnt alive, from being read in the common courts of justice. Why cannot you see the affair with as much horror, as I do and let it succeed in curing you once for all of having anything to do with such riff-raff? My hair stands on end when I think of it, because if the King had not withdrawn your letters you would have been ruined for ever in the estimation of all decent people, especially in foreign countries. You have had a lucky escape, but, for God's sake, let it be a warning to you against ever getting entangled with such people again. I beg you to think over this adventure very seriously, and let it preserve you from ever getting into such a scrape again. Consider, also, if there is anything you can do to remove from the King's mind the dreadful impression it has made, and that is a matter which needs to be seen to at once. Good-bye, my dear child, I am overcome with grief to think that they found letters from you in that infamous woman's house, but I shall forget all about it if you will at least try to correct your conduct and have done with such horrible things. Good-bye, my eyes are so full of tears that I can write no more.

Madame's son gets into trouble.

21*st June*, 1696, Saint-Cloud.

To the Abbe Dubois.

Monsieur appeared more upset about this affair than I should have dared to hope, but he was so distraught that he exaggerated

the affair, because he told me at first that the King had in his possession some dreadful letters from my son to this horrible woman[1]; now, however, he tells me that there were none of my son's letters, but only Feuquieres, who mentioned my son and his infamous purchases. That is not at all pleasant, but still it is better than if the King had letters of my son's in his hands. I beg of you to let me know what effect the news produces on my son that this wretched woman is going to be put to death, and that the King is very angry with him. From that I shall be able to judge what we have to hope for, because if once something could be done to tame him I should hope that your good counsels would make an impression on him, and then we could reasonably renew hope, and when there is hope one can talk with a better heart.

Madame describes Fagon, the physician of Louis XIV.

15*th July*, 1696, Port-Royal.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

Most of what people tell you about the other world is quite incomprehensible, but the idea of metempsychosis does not displease me so long as we may remember what we were in a former life . . .

You would find difficulty in even imagining what Doctor Fagon[2] looks like. He has meagre thighs as thin as a bird's legs, a mouth bulging with teeth, the upper ones being black and decayed, and large coarse lips which make his mouth too prominent. His eyes are almost closed and his complexion is dark and yellow. His face is long and his expression is as crafty as his nature. At the same time he really is very clever and tactful . . . The Duc du Maine has dismissed a nurse who looked after and washed Madame du Maine while she was in childbed, because she said that his wife had a peculiar malformation . . .

[1] This was apparently one of the notorious sorcerers of the times.

[2] Guy-Crescent Fagon, Physician to Louis XIV (1638-1718). The chroniclers of the time agree as to his fine character and great skill and sagacity. He was devoted to his profession and hated anything in the nature of charlatanism. Louis trusted him implicitly in all matters regarding his health. "Fagon was a man of infinite sense, and withal a good and a kind man."—Saint-Simon.

I hope with all my heart that what the Duchesse d'Ostfriesland wrote to you may come to pass, and that there may be a general peace and that my daughter may marry the Duc de Lorraine, because, to judge from my knowledge of her temperament, I think that she would be happier with the Duc than with the King of the Romans.

The death of Madame's youngest half-sister.

22nd July, 1696.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

My dear Louisa and Amelisa, I learnt yesterday evening, through the *Gazette de Hollande*, that God, the All-Powerful, has taken Caroline to himself, and the shock was none the less terrible because the news was unexpected . . .

I beg of you one favour, and that is that you will send the enclosed letter to the Duke of Schomberg. I have written to him in French because I do not know how to address a duke in German, nor what title to give him.

A Princess of England is disappointed in love.

26th July, 1696, Saint-Cloud.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

At Saint-Germain the other day, someone said before the little Princess of England[1] that the Duc de Bourgogne[2] was going to marry the Princess of Savoy.[3] The dear child began to weep bitterly and said that she thought the Duc de Bourgogne would not marry anyone but herself, and that the day he married the Princess of Savoy she would go into a convent and remain single all her life. Nothing would console her, and she has been mournful ever since she heard the news.

[1] Louisa Maria Theresa, daughter of James II. She was born at Saint-Germain in 1692.

[2] Eldest son of the Dauphin. He became Dauphin in 1711, after his father's death, but died in 1712. His third son succeeded Louis XIV on the throne of France in 1715, as Louis XV.

[3] Marie-Adélaïde de Savoie. She was the eldest daughter of Victor-Amadée and Anne-Marie, Madame's younger stepdaughter.

Madame's daughter and the King of the Romans.

29th July, 1696, Saint-Cloud.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

To be sure I should dearly like my daughter to be able to marry the King of the Romans, but, as far as I can see, the Emperor does not wish it, and I am sure that our King is not urging it very strongly, because, so I am informed, the old wretch[1] has again bethought herself of her horrid little beast[2] and wants my daughter to marry him. That, however, would not suit me at all, so I should be very glad to marry her off quickly to the King of the Romans and so be rid of this other anxiety . . . I do not suppose that the Princess of Savoy will be happy here, because the Duc de Bourgogne is very cold and obstinate. Moreover she will fall into the hands of the pious folk who will look askance at any joy or pleasure she may have.

Drunkenness in the Royal Family.

8th August, 1696.

To the ABBE DUBOIS.

However debauched my son may be, I thank God that he has no taste for the vice which is now the fashion. My son's children must be born drunk to judge from the liking which he and his precious other half have for wine. It is a terrible habit. God grant that they may correct themselves of it.

The fortunes of Madame's family.

12th August, 1696, Saint-Cloud.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

It is to be hoped that we all meet our end as Caroline did, because she died with real firmness. Happy is he who has a solid faith in the next world, because in this world there is not much to look for or hope for beyond a very small share of joy and contentment, and those who depart first are the more happy. It seems to me that we children of the late

[1] Madame de Maintenon again.
[2] The Duc du Maine.

Elector [1] have not much to boast about in the way of happiness here below. God grant that we may find eternal bliss.

You will be rendering me a service if you will send me the stockings and pins that Caroline ordered for me. Write and tell me how much they cost. I owe her for one pair of stockings and she never wrote to say how much they were.

Madame is treated with rudeness at Court.

2nd September, 1696, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

I am at present in undeserved disgrace. Whenever I come into the King's apartment the dirty old slut withdraws, and when I beg her to remain, she makes no reply but goes out with a sneer on her face. I am being treated in a very rude fashion. Every day I am forced to wait half-an-hour at the King's door before I am allowed to enter, and sometimes I am even sent away, although at the same time all the King's bastards and even Monsieur himself are in the room . . . I continue to go my own way, but sometimes I cannot help mentioning the matter to the King. My daughter had been for a drive with Madame de Chartres, and Monsieur asked me before the King whether she had returned. I replied : " I have sent a messenger to her room, Monsieur, because, since they always keep me waiting half-an-hour before I am informed whether I may have the honour of coming in here, I thought that my daughter would have had ample time to return." The King never said a word. . . .

At Paris the thieves have stuck up a placard bearing the

[1] After the death of the Elector Palatine, Charles-Louis, his children by Louise de Degenfeld were excluded from the succession, and were left in poor financial circumstances. Of the three daughters, Caroline married the son of the famous Duke of Schomberg, but did not live long afterwards, and Louisa and Amelia-Elisabeth remained unmarried, and lived first at Frankfort, then at Hanover with their aunt, whence they went to England, but returned to Germany after the death of the Duchess of Schomberg. The five sons took service in various armies. The eldest, Charles-Louis, died in the service of the Republic of Venice at the siege of Negroponte in 1688. Charles-Edward, in the Austrian army, died fighting against the Turks in 1690. Charles-Augustus died in 1691, fighting for the Prussians against the French. Charles-Casimir was killed in the same year in a duel, and Charles-Maurice died of the effects of drink in 1702. Charles, who succeeded his father as Elector Palatine, died five years later, in 1685.

words: "Hitherto we have contented ourselves with robbery, but if members of our band who are captured continue to be put upon the wheel, we will murder and spare no one." And as a matter of fact they are beginning to kill people. I am very anxious about my son, because he is very fond of strolling about Paris at night . . .

I should certainly be a virgin again, if not having slept with my husband for nineteen years could make me one.

The rumoured death of the Queen of Spain.

6th September, 1696, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

Yesterday evening we received some news which distressed me greatly and made me shudder. I mean the announcement of the lamentable death of the poor Queen of Spain.[1] They opened her and took away a baby which was still living, in order to have it baptised. It was a boy. This is a terrible tragedy for the country. A German lady called Brelips and two of the poor Queen's chambermaids also ate the same poisoned eel-pie and they died at the same moment that she did. It is a horrible affair, and any Princess who is doomed to become Queen of Spain is much to be pitied . . . I cannot forgive the Spaniards for poisoning all their queens in this fashion . . . They poisoned our Queen because she had no children and now this one because she was going to have one . . .

Except at meal times the King never sees anyone but the Princesses, doctors, the Dauphin, Monsieur, his own bastard sons and Madame de Maintenon. As for me, I only see his Majesty nowadays for a few minutes between a quarter to one and one o'clock, never longer. The others are allowed to see him three times a day. The Dauphin dines and sups with the Princesse de Conti, Madame de Lislebonne's two daughters, Madame de Châtillon and the Princesses' maids of honour. The King shuts himself up all day and never sees any other members of the Court. Monsieur, to be sure, dines and sups with the children and me, but after the meals we all go our own ways. My son and daughter go off together, Madame de Chartres goes

[1] This was only a rumour. Queen Marie-Anne was indeed seriously ill in 1696, but recovered and lived to play an important part in the negotiations over the vexed question of the Spanish succession.

home with Madame la Duchesse, and I go to my chamber. Monsieur betakes himself to this place or the other where the keenest gamblers are to be found. So there is no Court anywhere. It is all very strange, and I have never seen anything like it in my life. Everyone complains of being bored . . . The King's anthrax will soon be better.

The King and the heir to the throne.

13th September, 1696, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

The day before yesterday I saw his Majesty being bandaged.[1] The wound is bigger than my hand and in the shape of a cross. The King endures all his suffering with great patience and firmness. I am being treated a little better now than formerly and am not kept waiting so long at the door. I do not think that the wound will heal up for at least a month, but it is to be hoped that the King's health will be better than ever after he is cured. I hope with all my heart that it will, because from what I know of his son's character, things would be ten times worse than they are at present if he were to become King. He is indeed in the path of righteousness, as the Jesuit said to Monsieur de Hoquincourt. Which means to say that he is quite incapable of thinking. People leave reasoning to the parsons, because they say that those who preach must know everything.

The Old Pretender as a boy.

20th September, 1696, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

I found good King James, the Queen, and the two Royal children all in good health. The Prince of Wales[2] is the most charming child you could wish to see. He understands French

[1] After an anthrax pustule had been incised.

[2] James Francis Edward, commonly called the Old Pretender. James II and his second wife, Mary of Modena, had several children—none of whom lived, and the birth of a healthy son and an heir to the throne, in 1688, precipitated the revolution. There was a widely-circulated rumour that the Queen had not given birth to a child at all, but that a baby was smuggled into her room in a warming-pan, and shown to the onlookers as if it were the Queen's.

now and speaks it fluently. He is lively, gay and not at all shy, and will talk as much as you like. He is well-built and has beautiful little legs, pretty feet and a grand air. He is not at all like his father or mother, but resembles very much the pictures of his uncle the late King of England, and I am sure that if the English people could see the child they could no longer doubt that he was of Royal birth. The Princess will have a pretty figure. She does not talk much and does not understand French. In face she resembles her mother, but her eyes are more beautiful than the Queen's. She is as sweet and gentle as a lamb. Her little brother is said to be a little obstinate, but I have never noticed it, because he is very fond of me and does everything I tell him.

Madame confounds a Bishop.

30*th October*, 1696, Fontainebleau.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

Please give Monsieur Leibnitz my thanks. I consider that his treatise is very well written, and I admire the lucidity with which he writes on such a complicated subject. It is a great consolation to me to know that animals do not entirely die, because of my dear little dogs. Descartes' remarks on the subject of the wheels of watches struck me as very ridiculous. The other day I confounded a Bishop who completely agreed with this way of thinking. He is by nature of a very jealous disposition and I said to him: "When you are jealous are you being an object or a man, because, except for my dogs, you are the most jealous thing I know, so I am wondering whether it is a movement of an object or a passion of the soul." He flew into a rage and went off without replying to me.

The arrival of the little Duchesse de Bourgogne.[1]

8th November, 1696, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

I must tell you a little about the future Duchesse de Bourgogne, who at length arrived at Fontainebleau last Monday.

[1]Marie-Adelaide of Savoy, eldest daughter of Victor-Amadée II, Duc de Savoie, and Anne-Marie d'Orleans, Monsieur's daughter by Henrietta of England. She was eleven years of age at the time of her arrival in France to marry the Duc de Bourgogne, eldest son of the Dauphin.

The King, Monseigneur, Monsieur and my son went to Montargis to meet her. I stayed behind in my chamber at Fontainebleau until she arrived, then when I received her I was still laughing. I thought I should die of laughter that day. There was such a crus hand so much pushing that poor Madame de Nemours[1] and the Maréchale de la Motte[2] were shoved and jostled the whole length of the room, until they were pushed backwards against us and finished by falling on top of Madame de Maintenon. If I had not held her by the arm, they would all have collapsed in a heap like a pack of cards. You can't think how comical it was. As for the Princess, she is not exactly very big for her age, but she has a pretty figure, as dainty as a little doll, quantities of beautiful fair hair, black eyes with lovely long eyebrows and lashes. Her skin is very fine, but rather dark. Her nose is small and neither pretty nor ugly. Her mouth is large and thick-lipped. She has, in fact, the real Austrian mouth and chin. She walks and holds herself well, is graceful in everything she does, and is very serious for a child of her age and uncannily wise. She does not make much fuss of her father-in-law, and hardly looks at my son and me, but the moment she sees Madame de Maintenon she goes smilingly to her and throws herself into her arms. She does the same with the Princesse de Conti, so you see how knowing she is already! People who have talked to her say that she is very intelligent. She takes the full rank of Duchesse de Bourgogne, but is simply called the Princess. She doesn't eat with the King, but has her meals alone. We are all returning to our childhood. The day before yesterday the Princesse d'Harcourt and Madame de Pontchartrain[3] played at blind-man's buff with the Princess and the Dauphin. Monsieur, the Princesse de Conti, the Prince de Conti, Madame de Ventadour, my other ladies and I all played the same game here yesterday. (What do you think of my company?) To tell you the truth I was not sorry to get a little exercise and make a noise.

[1] Madame de Nemours was the daughter of the Duc de Longueville, and wife of the last Duc de Nemours of the House of Savoy.

[2] The Maréchale de la Motte was governess to the children of Louis XIV as well as to his grandchildren and great-grandson.

[3] Madame de Pontchartrain, wife of the Chevalier de Pontchartrain, was one of the most popular women at Court. In 1700 she gave a magnificent fête, at which the Dauphin and his three sons and the Duchesse de Bourgogne were present.

Religion debars Madame's daughter from becoming Queen of England.

11*th November*, 1696, Port-Royal.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

Since I found out that my daughter is not allowed to marry King William,[1] I have come to the conclusion that religion spoils many things in this world. I cannot blame the King for not wishing to remarry, because the married state is a very precarious one, and one can never be sure that it will be successful every time.

Quarrels and rumours at the Court.

25*th November*, 1696, Paris.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

You will probably have heard ere now how the little bride arrived and that she has been accorded the rank of Duchesse de Bourgogne although she does not yet bear the name. Since it is decided that she takes precedence of me, it matters not whether it be now or later, because except for the precedence I have never had any other advantage from being the first lady in the land.

Madame de Chartres and Madame la Duchesse [2] had a terrible quarrel with the King last week, and Madame de Chartres seems to have come out of it better than her sister. Although the reigning lady had great reason to be angry with them, she was generous enough to obtain an audience for them with the King. The wretches do not spare their father any more than they do their step-mother, because three years ago they made some funny songs about him. This time it appears that he did not mince his language, and he seems to have been more annoyed on Madame de Maintenon's account than because of what they said about himself. The love he bears that woman is quite extraordinary, and everyone in Paris believes that as soon as peace is concluded the marriage will be announced and the woman will take her rank. That is another reason why I consider myself lucky to be no longer the first lady, because

[1] Mademoiselle, Madame's daughter, was, of course, a Roman Catholic.
[2] Legitimatised daughters of Louis XIV and Madame de Montespan.

at least I shall walk behind someone worthy, and will not have to hand the chemise and gloves to this precious lady. If, however, such a thing has to happen, I should prefer it to be done immediately, then we should at least have a semblance of a real Court again and would not be scattered as we are at present . . .

I wonder if the Duchesse de Bourgogne will be more fortunate than the Dauphiness, the Grand Duchesse and myself. When we each arrived we were each in our turn proclaimed wonderful, but they soon got tired of us. We had not, however, the advantage of being objects of interest to all the most powerful people at Court, as is the case with this little Princess, so that it is quite likely that her popularity will last longer than ours. No one could be more tactful than the little Princess. Doubtless it was her father who brought her up thus, because her mother is bluntly honest and frank . . . The young Princess is not as beautiful as she seemed at first, but I at any rate do not consider her so ugly as some people make out. She is certainly intelligent. You can see that from her eyes.

Taxes and philosophy.

29th November, 1696, Paris.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

I don't understand Monsieur Leibnitz's last letter so well as I did the one written in German. There is a great deal of mathematics in it, a subject about which I know nothing whatever, but I shall give it to some scholars to read and will ask them to reply to it. Our scholars are in difficulties at present, because of all the taxes they have to pay. They are as much concerned with them as with philosophy.

CHAPTER IX.

1697—1698.

The characters of James II and Charles II.

2nd January, 1697, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

King James used to be considered brave and obstinate, but never intelligent, and I remember that Madame de Fiennes used often to say to me, " The King of England[1] is very pleasant and witty, but he is feeble ; while the Duke of York[2] has courage and strength, but no wit, and he is deadly dull,"

The entertainment and education of a Princess.

17th January, 1697.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

I do not often speak to the Princess. To-day she is going to dine with the King at Marly, so you see that she is being well entertained. She is not allowed to amuse herself, however, with anyone but the King and Madame de Maintenon. I expect that the plays that are being played at Saint-Cyr for her benefit will so disgust her with others that she will not be able to endure them when she grows up. When she is alone with the King and Madame de Maintenon they allow her to do anything she likes, and she may behave as she pleases. The future will show what such education is worth.

[1] Charles II.
[2] Afterwards James II.

How Madame's son and the Dauphin pass their lives.

18*th January*, 1697, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

My son behaves no better than his father. He gives all he possesses to his mistress, and at the New Year he gave her presents worth fifteen hundred pistols; two earrings worth eight hundred pistols and the rest in jewels. He also allows himself to be put upon by his lackeys, and is so terribly debauched that I am afraid in the long run it will cost him his life.

The Dauphin takes no part in anything, but passes his life at the Princesse de Conti's house. He laughs at her, but is ruled by her just as surely as his father is by the Maintenon woman. He is in love with an actress, whom he has brought to Meudon.[1] He passes his nights with her, and during the day orders alterations to be done in the gardens and watches the workmen at their work. He does not dine but has breakfast, and at four o'clock sits down to a meal in company with all the gentlemen of his household. He spends two hours at the table and gets drunk. This is how he passes his life.

Madame la Duchesse[2] eats, drinks, plays at Lansquenet, and speaks evil of everyone.

Madame describes her daughter.

22*nd January*, 1697, Versailles.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

I have such a great respect for King William that I would rather have him for a son-in-law than the King of the Romans. I can say this with truth of my daughter, that she has no liking for coquetry and gallantry, and that as far as these are concerned she gives me no anxiety, and I am sure that, whoever she marries, her husband need have nothing to fear on that account. Her features are not beautiful, but she has a nice expression, a beautiful figure, a pretty complexion, and a kind heart.

[1] Mademoiselle Choin.

[2] Louise-Françoise de Bourbon, Mademoiselle de Nantes (1673-1749), daughter of Louis XIV and Madame de Montespan. She married Louis III, Duc de Bourbon-Condé.

Madame's half-sister and the future Queen Anne.

18*th February*, 1697, Versailles.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

You did quite right to stop going to visit the Princess of Denmark[1] when she stopped saluting you. She has no right to be so haughty, for her mother was of much lower degree than you are. Besides, it will produce a good effect when it becomes known that while you were in England you did not renounce the marks of respect to which you thought you were entitled. I think, therefore, that the Duke of Schomberg advised you correctly. . . .

The Dauphin has gone to Meudon to amuse himself. He was accompanied by the Princesse de Conti, the widow, many ladies and cavaliers, and also my son. Monsieur left to-day for Paris, where he will do the same, and I am here all alone, yawning my head off with boredom.

Marriages and marriage prospects.

14*th March*, 1697, Paris.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

One cannot drink bitter ale here, and the French beer is altogether too bad. It is so flat and bad that I cannot drink it, although I have tasted it a time or two. I remember how I used to drink it at Heidelberg. . . From all appearances I should say that my daughter is going to remain an old maid. Your King will probably marry the Princess of Denmark. The King of the Romans will, I should think, wed the second eldest Princess of Savoy, and the Duc de Lorraine will take the Emperor's daughter ; then there will be no one left for mine.

The plenipotentiaries have now left for Holland, and we shall soon see what good work they have done. There isn't a single person left who doesn't hold King William in the greatest respect. As far as I am concerned, I have never made a secret of my feelings towards him.

[1] Afterwards Queen Anne of England. Her mother was Anne Hyde, daughter of the Earl of Clarendon.

The mixed blood of the great English nobles.

17th March, 1697, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

As far as I can see, the great English nobles are of as mixed blood as are our dukes here. There are scarcely two amongst them who can prove their right to four quarters. . . .

I did not know that there was any music in the English plays, except for a few violins, which are played during the intervals. The theatre is my favourite amusement. My father used to say that there were no better comedies in the world than the English ones, so I hope that you will enjoy them.

The three grandsons of Louis XIV.

28th March, 1697, Saint-Cloud.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

I too have heard the prophecy you quote, but this man[1] has such good health that he will live a long time. His son [2] will do as he likes, and we shall see strange doings. He is proud, self-willed, and quick-tempered, and those who are ruled by him will have their work cut out. His three children are very badly brought up.[3] They always have their meals alone, and the three of them go out alone together, and they never take any part in any ceremony. At nine o'clock in the morning they go to visit the King, who sees no more of them all day. When there is an *appartement* they arrive at the exact moment when the music begins, and make off as soon as it is finished. They never appear in public. The eldest has a sharp, dry way of speaking. The second rarely speaks at all, and when he does it is in a slow and hesitating manner. The third is always gay, and is delighted when anyone speaks to him. He does not hold himself as stiff as a log like his brothers, and is quite frisky.

[1] Louis XIV.
[2] The Dauphin. He died in 1711.
[3] The Ducs de Bourgogne, d'Anjou and de Berri

The serious illness of Madame's grand-daughter.

15*th May*, 1697, Saint-Cloud.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

Last night we were told that my son's little daughter was dying, so we went to Paris and spent the whole day there. Monsieur made them give her English drops, and since then she has been a little better, but I am afraid the poor child cannot recover, because she is in too weak a state. . . . I wish you had given me fuller details of the ceremony at which you were present at Windsor, because although such things may be of little importance in themselves they are a great help to me in making conversation, and I have often great difficulty in finding anything to say.

Madame dislocates her arm when hunting wolves.

16*th May*, 1697, Saint-Cloud.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

I received your letter a fortnight ago, but it has been impossible for me to answer it because I am not very skilful in using my left hand, and I do not care to dictate my letters to Mademoiselle de Rathsamhausen, because her spelling is so very bad. . . .

A month ago to-day I was hunting wolves with the Dauphin. It had rained, and the ground was slippery. We had been looking for a wolf for two hours, and as we had not found one, were on the point of setting out for another part of the forest where we hoped to find a wolf. Suddenly, without warning, someone passed me at a gallop. My horse wanted to gallop after the other, and started to rear, and landed with his hind feet on the wet grass; they slipped from underneath him, and he fell over on his right side. My right elbow hit a stone, and the big bone in my arm was dislocated. Someone immediately went to find the King's surgeon, but he was missing; his horse had lost a shoe, and he had stopped at another village to have one put on. A peasant who happened to be on the spot said that there was a very clever barber two miles away, who was accustomed to setting arms and legs every day. When I heard that he had had such a lot of experience, I got into a carriage and was taken to him. I suffered great pain on the journey,

but as soon as he had put my arm back, I felt no more pain. I got into my carriage again and returned here at full gallop. Next day Monsieur and the surgeon were anxious to see whether my arm was well set. I expect they were also a little bit jealous because the peasant had done the thing so well, and they made the poor man believe that if he did not examine the arm at once gangrene might set in. The poor peasant allowed himself to be persuaded by these wicked surgeons, and bared my arm, which should have stayed in its dressings for nine days. They moved the arm and put back the dressings so badly that they had to be taken off again the next day; this caused such a dreadful swelling of the hand and arm that before long I could not use my hand nor raise it to my mouth, while I could do everything before those accursed doctors had the bandages taken off the first time. . . . I should have been quite well now if they had left my poor peasant alone. . . . I am very grateful to you for having told all that you saw in England. I had to laugh heartily at that funny comedy called *Psyche*.

Negotiations for peace.

11*th July*, 1697, Saint-Cloud.

To the Duchess of Hanover.

They were saying yesterday that Lord Portland[1] asked the Maréchal de Boufflers to come and discuss something with him. Everyone tries to see in this a good omen for peace. If it should really turn out to be so, then it would be William and not Louis who would give peace to the world.

Madame is not an advocate for marriage.

19*th July*, 1697, Saint-Cloud.

To the Raugravine Louisa.

It is always a bad sign for a country when it is the custom for a man to enquire whether the lady he desires to marry is rich, because that proves that they do not care about virtue.

[1] Lord Portland and Maréchal de Boufflers had, in fact, many conferences together of a private and informal nature, the direct result of which was the signing of the Peace of Ryswick, by which Louis undertook to acknowledge William as the legitimate King of England.

I am sure that England is not the only country where there are unhappy homes and capricious husbands. In order to avoid finding them you would have to quit this world, and whoever desires to marry had better not ask my advice, because I am not an admirer of marriage.

The Prince de Conti and the Crown of Poland.

4th August, 1697, Saint-Cloud.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

This is what I have been told, but I do not know whether it is true, although I had it from a reliable source. Our King sent for the Prince de Conti and told him that people are mocking at them both because he tarries here so long without doing anything, and peacefully abandons his kingdom[1] to another instead of putting himself at the head of his party. Louis asked him, therefore, if he had no intention of setting forth. At first the Prince replied that he would do anything that his Majesty commanded, "I am quite sure," replied the King, "that you are obedient in everything, but I insist on your telling me why you have not asked my permission to depart." The prince is said to have replied to this as follows: "I am quite ready to set out if your Majesty will send me thither as befits a Prince of the Blood, with an escort and troops, but I don't think it becoming to set out like a wandering vagabond, without even knowing whether the Poles want me for their King or not. I know nothing but what the Abbé de Polignac reports, and I have often discovered the news that he sends to be false. Not a single Pole has written to me. It seems to me, therefore, that it would be compromising even your Majesty's reputation if in this uncertain state of affairs I were to set out into the world unaccompanied." The King, they say, was very well pleased with this reply, and in that mood went to the Council. But that evening someone to whom the King reported his conversation with the Prince—it is not known who the person was—must have told him that the Prince cared very little about the Kingdom of Poland, since he had absolute control

[1] On the death of John Sobieski in 1696 there were several claimants to the throne of Poland, including the Prince de Conti. The choice of the Diet fell, however, upon the Elector of Saxony, who became Augustus II of Poland.

over Monseigneur, and consequently intended to rule over France. This enraged Louis to such an extent that now he loathes the Prince, who, they say, finds the King's manner towards him completely changed.

The recognition of William III as King.

8th August, 1697, Saint-Cloud.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

Although the people of Paris, the army, and many of the courtiers are convinced that King William is thinking of marrying my daughter, I cannot bring myself to believe it. . . . The dirty old drab would do her best to stop any such thing. I do not think that King William has any desire to remarry, and even if he had, I do not think that his Parliament would allow him to marry a Catholic and a Frenchwoman. . . .

I was quite right when I foretold that no one would raise any difficulty about his being recognised as King. He had a good right to the title, and for a long time now everyone here has called him King William.

Madame's prophecy for a youthful prince.

15th September, 1697, Saint-Cloud.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

I am extremely fond of this Prince,[1] and it is impossible to see him without falling in love with him. He has such a charming disposition. . . . I think that in time he will become a great King, because although he is only nine years old, I am sure that already he would rule better than his father did.

Love in marriage is unfashionable.

4th September, 1697, Saint-Cloud.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

I have known for a long time that the Duke of Schomberg is eccentric. His own brother, the late Comte Charles, told me

[1] The Prince of Wales, son of James II, and better known as the Old Pretender.

so, but I thought that he only broke out before his wife, and that his sisters-in-law would never have a taste of his temper. Undoubtedly celibacy is the better state, since the best husband is not worth a fig. . . . Love in marriage is not at all fashionable now, and spouses who love each other are considered ridiculous. The Catholics in their catechism give marriage as one of the sacraments, but in point of fact they live with their wives with the greatest license, and in a manner which shows that they don't believe it to be a sacrament at all. It is taken for granted that husbands will have their affairs of gallantry and scorn their wives. . . . Even if my life depended upon it, I should not be allowed to go to a watering place outside the kingdom, and, moreover, there are many very good spas in France, so I cannot flatter myself that I should be allowed to take a trip into Germany. Barège and Bourbon are the baths we go to from here.

The Prince de Conti and the Nuncio.

3rd November, 1697, Paris.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

The Prince de Conti will amuse the Poles very much when they see him drunk, for he is very funny when he is in his cups. On such occasions he imagines that it is the other person who is tipsy and not himself. Last year at an *appartement* I found him very well primed. He came up to me and said, " I have been talking to the Nuncio, who stinks of liquor and is blind drunk. He is so tipsy that I am afraid he will not be able to remember all the amusing stories I told him." Then he began to sing and laugh and pay us compliments all in the same breath. This made me laugh heartily. " But, cousin," I said, " is it not perchance yourself who has been drinking, because you are very merry ? " He replied, with a grin, " There you are making the same mistake as Monseigneur, and Monsieur de Chartres and the Princesse de Conti. They all insist that it is I who am drunk and cannot see that it is the Nuncio." Then if my son and I had not prevented him, he would have gone to the Nuncio and asked him where he had been to get so well befuddled.

Gaming and the Opera.

10*th November*, 1697, Paris.

To the Raugravine Louisa.

You have probably heard already that peace has also been concluded with the Emperor and the Empire.[1] Fate seems to be against this general peace, because the news was nowhere received with joy, although it has been so long desired. The people of Paris did not like it either. They had, as it were, to be made to rejoice. . . .

In Poland, too, from all accounts, there will be no great war, because our Prince de Conti's affairs are not going at all well there, and they say that he will soon be coming back here. I should think that he would be happier here than as King of Poland, because it is a savage and miserable country, and the nobles are too ambitious.

I see that you like gaming as little as I do. Ombre is very fashionable here. In fact, only Lansquenet and ombre are played in this country. There is not much dancing, but it may become fashionable again, because the future Duchesse de Bourgogne dances to perfection. . . . Write and tell me, dear Louisa, what the Duc de Lorraine looks like, and what sort of character he is. . . . There they are calling me to go to church, for it is Sunday. After church we shall have the company of the Dauphin, who is coming to dinner with us. After dinner he will play Lansquenet, and in the evening we shall all go together to the opera. The play they are playing now is really only a ballet, but it is very nice. It is called *L'Europe galante*, and it shows how the French, Spanish, Italians and Turks make love. The characteristics of these nations are splendidly portrayed, which makes it very amusing.

The Prince de Conti in Poland.

14*th November*, 1697, Paris.

To the Duchess of Hanover.

It looks very much as if the Poles had only sent for the Prince in order to extract money from him. They are a treacherous and greedy people, even worse than the English. L'Abbé de

[1] By the Treaty of Ryswick.

Polignac seems to have promised them twelve millions, which I should say will never be paid. I don't think that people here are very sorry that the Abbé has received a few blows, but I regret that the Prince de Conti was forced against his will to undertake this unpleasant and fruitless expedition. I wish he were back, and I am sure he is even more eager to return. If he returns by land the King of Poland will not hinder him, and will let him through unmolested, because his return will mean that the affair is ended.

The wedding ceremonies of the Duc and Duchesse de Bourgogne.

8th December, 1697, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

Your kind letter arrived in time yesterday to cheer me up and make me forget the weariness I had to endure during the wedding. There was such a crush that I had to wait a quarter of an hour at each door before I could enter, and my dress and petticoat were so frightfully heavy that I could hardly stand upright. The dress was of gold, covered with raised flowers of black chenil, and my ornaments were pearls and diamonds. Monsieur had a habit of black velvet embroidered in gold, and he wore all his big diamonds ; my son's costume was embroidered in gold and various colours, and was completely covered with gems. My daughter wore a gown of green velvet, embroidered in gold ; the gown and underskirt were studded all over with rubies and diamonds, and so was the corsage ; the embroidery was so exquisitely made that each flower stood out as if it were embossed ; her headdress consisted of several *enseignes* made of brilliants, and ruby *poinçons* with a golden ribbon completely covered with diamonds. The King wore a habit of cloth of gold with hair-coloured embroidery on it. Monseigneur also wore a habit of cloth of gold covered with golden embroideries. The bridegroom wore a black mantle worked in gold with a white doublet embroidered in gold with diamond buckles. His mantle was lined with rose and embroidered in gold, silver, and hair-colour.

The bride had a dress of cloth of silver and an underskirt with silver ribbons decorated with rubies and diamonds. All the diamonds she wore in her hair and elsewhere were crown jewels. Monsieur d'Anjou had a golden brocade embroidered in silver.

Monsieur de Berri, my favourite, wore a habit of black velvet embroidered with little gold flowers. Madame de Chartres's dress resembled the Duc d'Anjou's, and she wore a parure of diamonds. Madame la Duchesse had a dress of flame-coloured velvet embroidered in silver, and she also wore diamonds. The Princesse de Conti was attired like my daughter, in a dress and skirt of green velvet embroidered in gold, and a parure of pearls, diamonds, and rubies. Madame la Princesse wore a dress of velvet with a skirt ornamented with gold lace, and a parure of diamonds. Madame de Condé's dress was of flame-coloured velvet and her skirt was embroidered in silver. Her parure was of diamonds. Those are all the dresses that I can remember. A quarter of an hour before mid-day we went to Mass, which was only a Low Mass recited by Cardinal de Coislin in his capacity of Chief Almoner. Before the Mass began, the betrothal was celebrated. The King, Monseigneur, Monsieur and I stood round the betrothed couple. When the moment came to say "I will," the bride bowed four times, but the bridegroom only twice, because he had only to ask the consent of his father and grandfather, while the bride asked Monsieur's and mine as well, since we are her grandparents. When the Mass began the King and the rest of us returned to our places, while the betrothed remained kneeling before the altar.

I forgot to say that the ceremony took place in the King's drawing-room. The bridegroom went to fetch his betrothed, led her forward, then they both walked immediately in front of the King. After the Mass was finished, the register was signed by the King, the bride, the bridegroom, and Monsieur and me as relations. Then by the Duc d'Anjou, the Duc de Berri, my son and Monsieur le Prince as witnesses. When we withdrew the bride took her rank as Duchesse de Bourgogne behind the King, but the bridegroom still escorted her. We sat down directly at the table. It was in the shape of a horseshoe, and no one had a place except the members of the Royal Family, and the bastards. Madame de Verneuil was there, too, because she is the widow of the bastard son of Henry IV. I was not dull at the table because I was next to my dear Duc de Berri, who kept me laughing. "I see my brother," he said, "winking at his little wife, but if I liked I could make eyes at her too, because I have known how to ogle for a long time now. You have only to look straight ahead, then sideways." As he said this he imitated his brother so funnily that I could not help laughing

at him. After the feast we repaired to the Duchesse de Bourgogne's chamber, and stayed there a quarter of an hour without sitting down. Then everyone separated to their own rooms. At seven o'clock we again assembled in the King's suite. There was such a crush that the King, who had been to visit Madame de Maintenon, could not get through, and had to wait for a quarter of an hour at the door until the crowd had thinned a little. We had to wait three-quarters of an hour in the King's drawing-room for the arrival of the English Royal Family. The King, the bride, and all the rest of us went as far as the antechamber to meet their Majesties. The Queen was dressed in cloth of gold with black flowers and a parure of diamonds. The King wore hair-coloured velvet with diamond buttons. We went in procession to the great hall, where we remained for three-quarters of an hour. From there we went into the gallery to see the display of fireworks, which was magnificent. Then we sat down at the table. The Kings placed the Queen between them, and the other places were arranged as they had been at mid-day.

Immediately after supper the bride was taken to her room and disrobed. The Queen handed her her nightdress, and the King of England did the same for the Duc de Bourgogne. The bride's dressing table was beautifully equipped, and her bedspread was trimmed with lace a foot deep. It was Venetian point lace, but had been made in Paris with the arms of the bridal couple worked in it. As soon as they had finished putting the bridegroom to bed, the King called the ambassador of Savoy, and showed him the two of them in bed. The ambassador immediately dispatched a gentleman to hasten to the Duke of Savoy with the news.[1] After that everyone went home. This morning nothing interesting has happened, but this evening at six o'clock the King will hold a large reception with the Duchesse de Bourgogne until a quarter past seven o'clock, when there will be an *appartement*. We are all wearing full Court dress again to-day.

[1] This was only the official wedding night of the Duc and Duchesse de Bourgogne, and after the withdrawal of the Ambassador and the Court the Duc de Bourgogne retired to his own room. Saint-Simon gives the most detailed account of the wedding night ceremonies. Breteuil gives an account of the evening of 22nd October, 1699, when the Duc and Duchesse resumed their conjugal life.

The best way to succeed at Court.

12*th January*, 1698, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

In this Court nothing is done for Christian charity or generosity or even justice, but only for personal advantage and in view of favours to be rendered in return. The best way to succeed in anything is to beg Madame de Maintenon to look favourably upon your scheme, because everything is done through her. It was because of her intervention that King William made peace, and that the Queen Duchess arranged the marriage of her son[1] with my daughter.

Madame and the Earl of Portland.

16*th February*, 1698, Paris.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

Last night I had the pleasure of a long conversation with Lord Portland.[2] He told me that he had often had the pleasure of paying his respects to you, and that he admired very much the perfection with which you speak both English and Dutch. He sang your praises on other accounts also. His Lordship has discovered how to talk to me in order to please me. Monsieur, who, as you know, does not exactly love to see me treated with respect, is not at all pleased because Lord Portland comes to see me and talk to me so often. As he cannot very well forbid him to come, he tries to make me distrust him. He says, " This nobleman only comes to talk to you so often in order to worm secrets out of you." I replied, " That might be suspected if it were a question of you, because you may know the secrets of the King and State, but I know none of them, so I need not fear that he will get them out of me. I am very fond of conversing with him, because he tells me about people I love and respect. That can hurt no one. You may be sure that when people talk to me about my aunt and uncle and the Duke of Zell, I listen to them eagerly." He could not gainsay that, so he

[1] Leopold-Charles, Duc de Lorraine et de Bar.

[2] Hans William Bentinck, Earl of Portland, had been an intimate friend of William III before the latter came to England, and continued in equal favour for many years afterwards. At the time of this letter he had been sent as Ambassador to the Court of France.

MEDAL OF MADAME,
by Ferdinand de Saint-Urbain.
Reverse shows Juno and a peacock.
(*Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.*)

began to say that it would displease the King and Queen of England at Saint-Germain, and I replied, " I do not know how to act for the best, because I am very sorry for them, and would like to do them a good turn, but I can't help respecting King William, because he deserves it. I have never deceived them on this point, nor disguised my feelings from them. Moreover, I can hardly turn away the ambassador of a king who is recognised as such, and who is received with marvellous civility by the King and yourself, and who shows me attentions and brings me many kind messages from his master the King, who desires my friendship. On the contrary, this all means that I must treat him well and show him civilities in my turn, and the King and Queen at Saint-Germain have nothing to object to in that. . . ."

The entrance into Paris of the Earl of Portland.

18*th March*, 1698, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

On Sunday Lord Portland made his entrance into Paris[1] His livery was very magnificent. He had six carriages, twelve led horses, twelve pages, fifty outriders, and a great following of noblemen. On Monday he had audiences here, and since they have to make a song of everything in France, someone has written a ballad about this entrance. I am sending it to you. It strikes me as funny that they should now be singing the praises of the ambassador of a king whose effigy only a few years ago they burnt and dragged through the streets.

Last Monday after the audience I donned my hunting dress and went with the King to the falconry. It was beautiful weather. I gave him your reminder about the Raugraves, but could obtain no reply but " I will see about it " from him. Talking of this " I will see," reminds me of a story I must tell you about something a Gascon did a few months ago. He was

[1] The Earl of Portland had himself arrived in Paris on January 31st, but the formal entrance was put off in order to allow his suite and equipages to arrive. This formal entrance was made in magnificent style, and Portland's embassy of five months' duration is said to have cost eighty thousand pounds. A diary of this embassy is preserved in the Manuscript Department at the British Museum and, in a very rare printed copy, at the London Library. In it we read that a point of etiquette made the Ambassador refuse to receive Madame's equerry, but she magnanimously overlooked the incident, and received Portland as if nothing had occurred.

an officer who had done his duty well in the last war, and had lost an arm into the bargain. He appealed to the King to grant him a pension. As usual the King said, "I will see." The officer replied to him, "But, Sire, if I had said that to my general when he was sending me into the battle on the day on which I lost my arm I should have it still, and would not need to ask you for anything." The King was so deeply touched by this that he granted the pension on the spot.

King William in Holland and in England.

24th April, 1698, Marly.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

My son told me that when they were talking about Holland and England, Monsieur de Wassenaer said with regard to King William, "He is King of England and Stadholder of Holland." "Say, rather," retorted a nobleman, "that he is King of Holland and Stadholder of England." Wassenaer replied, "From the point of view of hearts, it is true that the King reigns in the hearts of the Dutch; that is doubtless what you meant." "No," said the Englishman, "I repeat plainly and openly. He is King and absolute ruler in Holland, but he is not in England, because there is a Parliament which will know perfectly well how to clip his wings if he tries to fly too high." . . . My son asked if Keppel[1] was a man of any worth. "Yes," replied the Englishman, "he has the merit of being seventeen years of age and very handsome. That is why the King of England has use for him." He went on to tell a great deal of scandalous tittle-tattle about King William. It must be acknowledged that they are an extraordinary nation.

Ninon de Lenclos.

18th May, 1698, Saint-Cloud.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

I am very glad that my little story about Ninon amused you. She may have led any sort of life she pleased, and no one would say anything against her, because she is one of the Pantocrat's[2]

[1] Arnoud Joost von Keppel, created Earl of Albemarle by William III.

[2] Madame de Maintenon. Ninon was a friend of Scarron's before his marriage with Françoise d'Aubigné.

most intimate friends, whom she has known for many years. The friendship began at the Marais. Now that Mademoiselle de Lenclos is old, she lives a very strict life. She maintains, so they say, that she would never have reformed if she herself had not realised how ridiculous the whole thing was. I did not know that Charles-Louis knew her, but my son is one of her particular friends and she is very fond of him. I wish he would go to see her more often, and would haunt her in preference to his boon companions, for she would inspire him with nobler and better sentiments than they do. At any rate, she would try to do so, from all accounts.[1] Her friends all extol her, and often say, "There is not a better fellow anywhere than Mademoiselle de Lenclos." She has the reputation of being very modest in manner and conversation, which my son is not the least bit in the world.

The Duc de Chartres and night life.

27th May, 1698, Versailles.

To the Duchess of Hanover.

. . . It is hard to say who is in favour with my son and who is not, because he flutters about unceasingly and cannot settle to anything. He knows that there is nothing in the world that the King hates so much as to see him careering about Paris at night. (The King knows very well that he only goes there in order to plunge into an orgy of vice),[2] yet he does it all the same. He can go from here without the King knowing anything about it, but he won't have patience for a single minute, and goes off from Marly, where the King can notice his absence from table and knows that he has gone. He is always doing silly tricks like that and makes me lose patience, because he is making himself despised by everyone on account of his irregular life. . .

[1] Madame de Sévigné writes in the same vein about her son: "I prefer Charles to enjoy the motherly affection of Mademoiselle de Lenclos, rather than the theatrical love of this Champmesle he has dug up."

[2] According to Saint-Simon he used to frequent the sorcerers, magicians, etc., in the quarters of Vanves and Vaugirard.

Madame's time-table.

17th June, 1698, Saint-Cloud.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

In the midst of this great Court I have become almost a hermit . . . and I pass whole days alone in my cabinet, where I occupy myself with reading and writing. If anyone comes to visit me I see them for a moment, and we talk about the weather or the news of the day; then I return to my solitude. Four days a week I devote to correspondence. On Monday I write to Savoy, on Wednesday to Modena, and on Friday and Sunday I write enormous letters to my aunt at Hanover. From six to eight o'clock I drive out with Monsieur and my ladies. I go to Paris three times a week, and also write daily to my friends who live there. Two or three times a week I go to the chase.

A game of cards.

2nd July, 1698, Marly.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

At Lansquenet many people think that they can break the luck of their neighbours by shuffling the cards, so they are shuffled very often. Whoever has the deal is obliged to allow anyone, who so desires, to shuffle, but yesterday an ardent player, Monsieur ce Boissière,[1] was losing heavily, and thought that it might bring him luck if the winners shuffled the cards, so he passed them to the Grand Prieur, who said to him, "Why don't you give the cards to Madame d'Epinay, who is winning more than I am?" Boissière replied with a smirk, "I should have liked to have given them to Madame, but I did not dare, because she doesn't like it, so I gave them to you, Monsieur." You can imagine what an outburst of laughter this caused.

[1] A son of Ninon de Lenclos. His paternity is said to have been decided by the drawing of lots between the Maréchal d'Estrees and the Abbé d'Effiat. The Maréchal won.

How to keep well in Paris.

8th July, 1698, Saint-Cloud.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

Many thanks, dear Louisa, for your offer to send me pure drugs from the pharmacies at Frankfort. When I need anything I shall ask you to send it to me, but as long as I am well I don't need anything. We can obtain better cherry brandy here . . . if, however, you would send me a little flask of the Emperor Charles' water for headaches, and let me know the price, you would be doing me a great service. It is the only thing that made it possible for me to spend last winter at Paris. As soon as I entered the town I put the bottle to my nose. That is how I avoid headaches.

The Quietists.

13th July, 1698, Saint-Cloud.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

From the description that Monsieur de Meaux[1] has given me of the Quietists, theirs is a very convenient sort of religion, because they consider prayers and all external show of religion to be unnecessary and only of use to unenlightened people. As far as they are concerned, they have given themselves to God once for all, so they can never by any chance be damned, and have nothing to do but to say once a day, "God Is." That is their whole duty, and the rest of the day they deny nothing to the flesh, holding it to be purely animal.

Bossuet's humour.

17th July, 1698, Saint-Cloud.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

I expect that the story of how Madame Guyon[2] attained grace will make you laugh heartily. It is much more amusing to

[1] Jaques-Bénigne Bossuet, Bishop of Meaux, the great funeral orator. He was the most determined enemy of the doctrine of Quietism, which gained a small measure of support in France at this time.

[2] Madame Guyon, a celebrated mystic, through whom Fénelon, Bishop of Cambrai, became attracted to the cult of Quietism.

hear Monsieur de Meaux telling these stories than to read his book. He kept me highly amused during the journey to Marly. Madame Guyon seems to me to be quite mad. . . . Monsieur de Meaux is very clever and is amusing and pleasant to converse with. . . . He is not at all bigoted.

Bossuet's view of Quietism.

20th July, 1698, Saint-Cloud.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

I thought Monsieur de Meaux's book would interest you, and according to what he told me quite openly about this affair of Madame Guyon, Monsieur de Cambrai only sides with Madame Guyon in order to hide his own inordinate ambition. It is quite certain that it was all a gamble to obtain power over the King and the entire Court. They resolved to win over Madame de Maintenon because she is the King's master, and they managed to do so. In their possession were found complete lists of offices to be given away, and they intended to change the entire Court and give all the highest positions to their own creatures. Religion was the last thing they had in their minds in this affair. When, however, Madame de Maintenon saw that Monsieur de Meaux had discovered their trickery, and that there would be a scandal, she was frightened lest the King should perceive how she had led him, and immediately turned round and left Madame de Guyon and all her party in the lurch. Then it all came out. I can assure you that this quarrel of the two bishops had nothing at all to do with the question of faith: it was purely a case of ambition. Hardly anyone cares for religion now . . . it is never more than a pretext, and these verses which have been made about it are quite true:—

"*Dans ces combats où nos prelats de France*
Semble chercher la verité,
L'un dit qu'on detruit l'esperance,
L'autre se plaint que c'est la charité,
C'est la foi qu'on detruit et personne n'y pense."

Madame and religious observances.

7th August, 1698, Marly.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

It is not acknowledged here that Monsieur de Cambrai's books have been approved by Rome, since they are still under examination. Monsieur de Nevers has declared himself for Monsieur de Cambrai. . . . I confess my ignorance, for I don't understand half of it. Evidently Mysticism is not my strong point. Madame de Maintenon will understand it better, because everything about her is mysterious. I must own that I was very much surprised to see the way this dame abandoned her very good friend, the Archbishop of Cambrai, because they used often to eat and drink together, and she never had any festivity such as a concert or a gathering of friends, without his being present. He was in the greatest favour, but now she persecutes him to the utmost. I am very sorry for him on that account, because it must be very harrowing for such a good man to find himself betrayed and persecuted by those in whom he had put complete confidence. Monsieur de Cambrai and Madame Guyon cannot deny all the stupidities that are recorded in Monsieur's de Meaux's book, because there are witnesses, and nothing has been included that cannot be proved. If I am not mistaken it is the Photinians who used to behave as you described to me. We had them at Mannheim too, but they did not stay there long. In England it wasn't always incense which they used to place before the Altar of Our Lord in order to worship him, but those vapourish people must have preferred its smell to that of incense.

I think that the Reformers are sincere when they do not want to pretend to believe things that they have no faith in. If it had only been a question of their sermons and psalms, their expulsion would not have been allowed. The Psalms are not, to be sure, so disagreeable to listen to as are the vowels of the High Mass. Nothing makes me more impatient than this eternal repetition of a a a a a, e e e e e, i i i i i, o o o o o, and if I dared I should often walk out in the middle of the service, so wearisome do I find it. . . . I am very grateful to Doctor Luther for having composed such pretty hymns, and I am sure that it is because of them that so many people want to turn Lutheran. There is something so cheerful about them. The Mystics, on the

other hand, with their contemplation, do not tempt me in the least.

Madame gives a detailed description of herself.

22*nd August*, 1698, Port-Royal.

To the RAUGRAVINE AMELIA-ELISABETH.

Last Monday one of my dearest friends died suddenly of an attack of apoplexy, and I have been weeping her loss bitterly. Her name was the Princess d'Epinay, and she was a very good woman. She was very clever, extremely polite and very kind-hearted. Her whole endeavour was to help her friends and relations, and she was excellent company. . . . You must have quite forgotten me if you don't think of me as ugly. I have always been plain, and since I had smallpox have become more so, and my figure is outrageous. I am as square as a dice, my skin is red, tinged with yellow ; I am beginning to go grey, and have pepper and salt tresses ; there are wrinkles on my forehead and round my eyes ; my nose is as crooked as it always was, and is pitted with smallpox to boot, as are also my cheeks, which are pendulous, with large jaws and jagged teeth. My mouth is changed too, having become larger and wrinkled at the corners. Behold what a beautiful object I am, dear Amelisa. . . .

You are much mistaken if you think that this is a land flowing with milk and honey. Life is more boring here than any other place in the world.

Lots of people drink tea, coffee, and chocolate, but I don't take any of those drugs. I have an idea that they are injurious to the health. . . . Madame de Chartres has just presented us with a daughter. Her eldest, who has just had her third birthday, is quite pleased to be called Mademoiselle d'Orleans and to let her sister be Mademoiselle de Chartres.

Freedom of thought in France.

31*st August*, 1698, Saint-Cloud.

To *the* DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

To-day I am sending you the Archbishop of Cambrai's book as I promised. You will see that he compromises himself

very badly. . . . One thing which, dare I say it, appears unjust to me, is that while they allowed Monsieur de Meaux to have his polemic against Monsieur de Cambrai printed, they won't allow the latter to print his justification. All printers have been forbidden, under pain of very severe penalties, to print any book of his. The copies we have obtained only reached us secretly through friendly hands. I had great difficulty in obtaining this one that I am sending you, but I never rested until I found it, because I thought that it would give you pleasure to read it. I don't understand the introduction, but I find all the rest very lucid and easily understood. I am like Pickleharing when he is a judge, in that I always agree with the last speaker. . . .

Here in France complete freedom of thought is allowed. Provided that you don't write books and that you go regularly to Mass, and do not side openly with the leader of any sect, you may believe what you like and nobody will intefere.

The upbringing of the Duchesse de Bourgogne.

18*th September*, 1698, Saint-Cloud.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

The Pantocrat is very powerful, but from all accounts she is not very happy and often weeps bitterly. Also she often talks about Death, but I expect that is only to see how people will reply to her. The Duchesse de Bourgogne is being absolutely spoiled. In the carriage she never stays still in her seat a moment, but sits on the knees of everyone and hops about all the time like a little monkey. They think all this charming. In her own chamber she is sole mistress, and everything she wants is done. Everything is permitted her and all she does is admired. If she were anybody else's child she would be whipped for behaving so badly. Later on they will be sorry, I have no doubt, that they have let the child have all her own way.

A millstone for the Archbishop of Cambrai.

21*st September*, 1698, Port-Royal.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

My son told me after his return from Compiègne that Monsieur de Meaux had said to him, " I am preparing a millstone for

Monsieur de Cambrai which will crush him once for all." Someone should have retorted, " If he sees it coming he will leap aside and let it fall to the ground." If this millstone is printed I will send it to you.

A quaint old German custom.

27th September, 1698, Saint-Cloud.

To the RAUGRAVINE AMELIA-ELISABETH.

It is an old German custom to sound the trumpet and beat the drum whenever a prince emerges from his private apartments or his castle. At the old Duc Auguste de Brunswick's castle the drummer was stationed in the gallery in front of the Duke's apartment, and as soon as the Duke left his cabinet he used to beat his drum. I think that is carrying it a little too far, but it is certainly very convenient when one is driving abroad in a carriage.

The marriage of Madame's daughter is fixed.

10th October, 1698, Fontainebleau.

To the RAUGRAVINE AMELIA-ELISABETH.

I have received the express with the dispensation for my daughter's marriage, and it will take place irrevocably next Monday. Afterwards we shall go to Paris and the next day she will depart. As you can imagine, I am feeling very sad, and am nearer weeping than laughing, for my daughter and I have never before been parted. . . . Every few minutes my eyes fill with tears, but I have to conceal them or people will mock at me, because in this country no one believes it possible for a mother to love her children tenderly. . . .

The wedding of Madame's daughter.

15th October, 1698, Paris.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

Whether my daughter's marriage turns out well or ill, it has certainly begun sadly enough. When they were married every

one in the Chapel wept. The King, the King and Queen of England, all the princesses, all the clerics, all the courtiers, even the soldiers and the Swiss guards, the ambassadors and the people. All wept bitterly. Only the Dauphin did not shed a single tear, but behaved as if he were at a show. The Duchesse de Bourgogne has at length shown that she has a good heart, because she was so sad that she could not eat, and continued to weep bitterly after she had said good-bye to her aunt. Yesterday I saw my daughter's dress and some furniture worth forty thousand crowns that the King gave her. You could not wish to see anything more beautiful. It is in thick cloth of gold and Venetian frieze, lined with gold cloth. The flowers are almost flame-coloured. The furniture consists of a bed, a table cover, six elbow chairs, and twenty-four chairs. It is a masterly piece of work by the celebrated Losné. I hope that in Lorraine they will think that my daughter is well equipped, because she has twenty thousand crowns worth of linens, laces, and embroideries, all very handsome and in great quantities, filling four enormous chests. . . .

The naughty little Duchesse de Bourgogne.

22nd October, 1698, Fontainebleau.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

The Duchesse de Bourgogne[1] is so badly brought up that I am quite sorry for the child. In the midst of dinner she begins to sing, dances on her chair, pretends to salute everyone, makes hideous faces, tears apart with her hands the chicken or partridge on the dishes, and sticks her fingers into the sauces. In fact, she could not possibly behave worse, and the people behind her exclaim, "Isn't she graceful, isn't she pretty?" She treats her father-in-law disrespectfully and calls him familiarly "thou." That makes him think that he is much in favour, and he is delighted. They say that she treats the King with still more familiarity.

[1] The Duchesse de Bourgogne at this date was aged eleven.

The future happiness of Madame's daughter.

5*th November*, 1698, Fontainebleau.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

The Duc de Lorraine seems to be very fond of my daughter, and if only their love could last they would both be happy enough. "*Mais hélas, il n'est point d'éternelles amours,*" as they say in "Clélie," and at Courts there are usually lots of wicked people whose delight it is to embroil their masters. So I find it impossible to believe that my daughter's happiness is assured.

Madame de Maintenon and her old friends.

31*st December*, 1698, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

The day before yesterday five of the Duc de Bourgogne's household were dismissed. . . . They are really only religious people, but are accused of being Quietists. . . . The Pantocrat is not as faithful to the friends she has made in her latter years as she is to those whose friendship dates from the days of the Marais. The poor Bishop of Cambrai has been her intimate friend, and she is his worst enemy, and persecutes him and all his family to the utmost. To be sure she will no longer have anything to do with the men who used to be her friends and lovers. It was of grief at this that Bartillon died.

CHAPTER X.

1699—1700.

Does the century begin with 1700 *or* 1701 ?

4th January, 1699, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

There is a great discussion going on at Court in which every one takes part from the King down to the lackeys. It was Monsieur Fagon who raised the question and the Cardinal d'Estrées, the Abbé de Beaubrun and several others as well are on his side, but all the rest of the Court is of the opposite opinion. This is the subject of the dispute : Does the century begin with the year 1700 or with the year 1701 ? Monsieur Fagon and his party are for 1700 because, say they, the hundred years are then completed ; but the others maintain that they are not completed until the year 1701. I should love to hear Monsieur Leibnitz's opinion about it ; if I must tell the truth, I am of Monsieur Fagon's opinion, and the King, the Dauphin, the Prince de Conti, Monsieur and all the Court are for 1701 . . .

The young Duc de Berri is put under restraint.

15th January, 1699, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

My dear Duc de Berri is under some sort of arrest. He is to stay shut up for a week and no one is to visit him. His apartment is closed. He richly deserved this punishment, having gone too far entirely. Last Monday he was out shooting rabbits with his brother. He is always very impetuous in everything he does, so his governors had told him to shoot as much as he liked, but not in the direction of his brothers. In spite of this he shot in their direction and only missed killing his elder brother

the Duc de Bourgogne by the thickness of two fingers. Monsieur de Razelie, his under-governor, quickly snatched the gun from his hands and forbade him to shoot any more. At this the Duc de Berri flew into such a rage that he tried to crack his own skull, and would have succeeded in doing so had they not taken a large stone which he was holding from his hands. He called his under-governor a wretch, traitor and scoundrel. The latter said to him : " I shall complain to the King, and he will do me justice." " Yes," said the Duc de Berri, " he will have your head cut off as you deserve." Because of all this the King had him put under arrest, which is all the same to him. Yesterday was the third day and he is still dancing and singing in his room. Yesterday he saw his under-governor come into the room and said to him in a gay voice : " Hullo, when is there going to be a ball ? Shall I not be dancing at it ? " Monsieur de Razelie replied : " How can you think of dancing ? Don't you realise that you are in prison." " I in prison," scoffed the Duc de Berri, " people of my rank are not treated like that. That is only for the like of you." That child has a proud temper which it is impossible to subdue, but all the same they are quite right to punish him for thus losing control of himself. The day before yesterday he said to one of his head lackeys who had formerly been with the Dauphiness and comes frequently to my lodging : " Genday, does Madame know what has happened, and what does she say about it ? " I told Genday to tell him that I was very sad because he of whom I was so fond had thus lost his good reputation, and he would be thought quite mad and capable of killing his brother and committing suicide if he did not mend his ways. I also said that I expected better things of him. I shall hear to-day what he replied and whether it brought him to his senses a little.

The dissipations of Madame's son.

2nd February, 1698, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

If my son continues the irregular life he is leading, I am sure that he will not live long. He passes whole nights in orgies of debauchery and often does not go to bed until eight o'clock in the morning . . . It is such a pity that my son is led to indulge in this life of dissipation. If he had been taught better and

more honourable ways, he would have become quite a different man. He is not lacking in intelligence nor is he ignorant, and from childhood he has always had an inclination towards all that is good and suitable to his rank. But since he has been his own master and these wicked people have taken him up and make him hob-nob with vulgar strumpets (I beg your pardon !) his character and appearance have altered so much that you wouldn't recognise him any longer. He cares for nothing now, not even the music of which he used to be passionately fond.

The masked ball at Marly.

8th February, 1699, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

I must tell you about the masked ball at Marly. On Thursday the King and all the rest of us had supper at nine o'clock, and afterwards we went to the ball, which began at ten o'clock. At eleven o'clock the masks arrived. We saw a lady as tall and broad as a tower enter the ballroom. It was the Duc de Valentinois, son of Monsieur de Monaco, who is very tall. This lady had a cloak which fell right to her feet. When she reached the middle of the room, she opened her mantle and out sprang figures from Italian comedies. Harlequin, Scaramouche, Polichinello, the Doctor, Brighella and a peasant, who all began to dance very well. Monsieur de Brionne was Harlequin, the Comte d'Ayen, Scaramouche, my son, Polichinello, the Duc de Bourgogne was the Doctor, La Vallière was Brighella and Prince Camille was the peasant . . .

The Dauphin arrived with another party, all very quaintly dressed, and they changed their costumes three or four times. This band consisted of the Princesse de Conti, Mademoiselle de Lislebonne, Madame de Chattillon, and the Duc de Villeroy. The Duc d'Anjou and the Duc de Berri and their households composed the third group of masks ; the Duchesse de Bourgogne and her ladies the fourth ; and Madame de Chartres, Madame la Duchesse, Mademoiselle d'Armagnac, the Duchesse de Villeroy, Mademoiselle de Tourbes, who is a daughter of Maréchal d'Estrées, and Mademoiselle de Melun, the fifth. The ball lasted until a quarter to two o'clock . . . On Friday all the ladies were elegantly attired in dressing-gowns. The Duchesse de Bourgogne wore a beautiful fancy costume, being

gaily dressed up in Spanish fashion with a little cap . . . Madame de Mongon was dressed in ancient fashion, Madame d'Ayen in a costume such as goddesses wear in plays. The Comtesse d'Estrées was dressed in ancient French style and Madame Dangeau in ancient German style. At half-past seven or eight o'clock masks came and danced the opening scene of an opera with guitars. These were my son, the Comte d'Ayen, Prince Camille and La Vallière in ridiculous men's clothes ; the Dauphin, Monsieur d'Antin and Monsieur de Brionne as ladies, with dressing gowns, head-dresses, shawls and towers of yellow hair much higher than are usually worn. These three gentlemen are almost as tall as each other. They wore quite small black and red masks with patches, and they danced with high kicking steps. D'Antin exerted himself so violently that he bumped into Monsieur de Brionne, who fell on his behind at the Queen of England's feet. You can imagine what a shout of laughter there was. Shortly afterwards my favourite, the Duc de Berri, went to disguise himself as " Baron de la Crasse " and came back and performed a very comical dance by himself. . . . There are some people who from first to last can never resist practical joking. Some years ago a cook who had robbed and assassinated his master in the army was broken on the wheel. After him they put another man on the wheel who had been courting a vivandière and had killed her. When the cook was on the wheel he asked them to remove the handkerchief from his eyes, saying that he would like to see something. " What is it ? " they asked. " What sort of face my comrade is making," he replied, " because usually he is very ugly when he weeps." They took off the handkerchief and he began to laugh and jeer at the other who was weeping. He called for an officer and said to him : " Tell the general that we are not encamped in a very pleasant spot." Then he sent for some wine, which he drank on the wheel. He began to make a speech and talked so much rubbish that the order was given for him to be strangled. When the executioner arrived, the cook said to him : " Monsieur de Luxembourg has forgotten that he is having me executed contrary to my sentence, because I should die on the wheel, and not be strangled, but I forego my privilege. Tell him from me, however, that a general should be more precise." Thus he died. He came from Saint-Cloud and was a ne'er-do-well aged twenty years, who would never hear Our Lord mentioned . . .

The future happiness of Madame's daughter.

13*th February*, 1698, Paris.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

I think it augurs well for my daughter's marriage that however much she is told about her future husband's poverty she is not cast down. She thinks, moreover, that she will be happy with him, and as happiness is largely a thing of our own imagination, I hope that her visions will come true.

The gallant Duc de Luxembourg.

4*th March*, 1699, Marly.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

Although he was a hunchback, the Duc de Luxembourg had qualities which appealed strongly to ladies of dubious virtue. He made an enormous number of conquests both at Court and in Flanders, and he remained a gallant to the end.

The vanished fortune of Madame.

6*th March*, 1699, Marly.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

You are much mistaken if you think that I am keenly interested in this affair of the Palatinate.[1] In time my children may benefit in some measure, but in my lifetime I shall never handle a farthing of it, because by my marriage contract everything belongs to Monsieur, and he spent the two hundred thousand crowns which he received from the Palatinate without giving me a penny. If any more comes from the same source I shall still have no good of it. . . .

[1] By the Treaty of Ryswick Louis abandoned his claims on Madame's behalf for a portion of the lands of the Palatinate, which had belonged to her father, in consideration of a sum of money.

The noble blood of German families.

20*th March*, 1699, Port-Royal.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

It always shocks me when people marry beneath them, and it is a great pity that the members of the House of Wittgenstein should marry out of their rank in this way, because theirs is a good old noble family. It would be very unfortunate if this fashion should become general in Germany, because it is just because their blood is purer and nobler that our German families are superior to those of other nations . . . If she still hopes to find favour, the Konigsmarck girl will have to hurry up, because she is not so very young. Is it perchance she who has aroused in the heart of the son of the King of Poland the desire to become a Greek Amadis? . . . At the present moment we have a great many German princes here: the day before yesterday there were six of them around me, as well as four counts and many German gentlemen. Altogether there were twenty-one in my room and as you can easily understand there was as much German spoken as French . . .

Madame and her possessions.

3*rd April*, 1699, Versailles.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

Unfortunately I was married according to the usages and customs of Paris, and it may happen that although I am credited with having great possessions I might be reduced to living entirely on the King's bounty, because if Monsieur squanders his fortune and mine and happens to die before me, nothing will come to me from any source. His appanage[1] cannot come to me, because if my son were to die without leaving a male heir, it would have to return to the King, as it only descends in the male line. So there would not be a liard for me. The appanage goes to my son and I have no claim to it.

[1] Appanage: the allowance made by the King to his brothers or younger sons, which returns to the Crown on their demise.

Madame's son contracts a fever.

1*st May*, 1699, Port Royal.

To the RAUGRAVINE AMELIA-ELISABETH.

I should like to be present at my daughter's lying-in if the King will allow me. She is a novice in such affairs and that is why I should like to be with her.

For the last week my son has given me great anxiety. A week ago he was smitten with a fever, which became continuous, with three exacerbations a day. I don't know how to tell you that in German. I have asked all the Germans here how to say it, but no one could tell me. To come back, however, to my son, I would not let them bleed him or give him medicine and now, God be thanked, he is in good health again . . .

Greet Charles-Maurice[1] on my behalf, and tell him to be careful in what company he drinks . . . Mathematics are very becoming to people of quality and I am very glad that he is studying them . . .

The story of Monsieur Tiquet and his enemies.

14*th May*, 1699, Port Royal.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

A councillor had been visiting one of his boon companions, and as they were near neighbours, he intended to return home on foot. He met an enormous ruffian dressed in greyish white, who looked at him truculently and said: "So here you are, Monsieur Tiquet. I have been waiting for you a long time." Saying this, the man drew a pistol and shot at him. The ball passed through his hair without touching him. He thought he had better pretend to be hit, so he cried out: "Alas, I am killed," and threw himself to the ground. The man who had fired at him replied: "You aren't dead, because you can speak," and went up to him, accompanied by another man dressed in greyish-brown. They drew their swords and gave the poor fellow twenty-six thrusts, four in his body and the others only in his clothes. The neighbours ran up and led Monsieur Tiquet into his friend's house. They hope that he will recover and have asked who his enemies were. He replied that he had none

[1] One of her half-brothers.

except his wife and his porter. The day before yesterday the latter was arrested, and he must have made some avowals which compromised the wife, because she also was arrested yesterday . . .

Gambling at the French Court.

19*th May*, 1699, Saint-Cloud.

To the RAUGRAVINE AMELIA-ELISABETH.

The Abbé de Teseu will not return to Frankfort. He himself thinks that he is going to go back, and that was Monsieur's intention, but an order from the King has changed all that, and in this country the King's brother has no will except the King's.

Gambling, and particularly Lansquenet, causes many strange adventures here. Only last winter four officers were reduced to such despair that they killed themselves. . . . They would have done better to amuse themselves with our German pastimes and simple games, and to have drunk milk. Then they would not have been reduced to such straits as to shoot themselves or poison themselves as they have done . . .

I cannot believe that King William will ever marry again. He has enough to do with his Parliament, without saddling himself with a wife as well . . .

The difficulties of arranging a meeting.

25*th May*, 1699, Saint-Cloud.

To the RAUGRAVINE AMELIA-ELISABETH.

Monsieur Ludolf's [1] book amused me very much and I think the engravings are very good . . .

If my journey to Bar were settled (it is there that my daughter expects to be brought to bed) I would joyfully arrange a meeting. But nothing is fixed yet. Here they put a thousand difficulties in your way and never let you act according to your own inclinations. If I were sure of going you could go there incognito and without any fuss . . . But to-day they say it can quite well be arranged, and to-morrow a thousand obstacles have arisen; then they say that it is too early to come to a

[1] Author of *Theatre Universal du Monde.*

decision, and since it takes only three days to get there, it will be time enough to settle the affair three days beforehand . . .

Does Monsieur Ludolf still wear his red wig that he ties under his chin? I am afraid I am not in his good books because he did not come to see me once although he stayed in France quite a long time. It is strange that scholars have such bad manners and can never act like the rest of mankind . . .

Taking the waters.

9th June, 1699, Port Royal.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

It is very fashionable here also this year to go away to take the waters. The Duc and the Duchesse . . have betaken themselves to Bourbon, so has the Princesse de Conti—the young one—and many members of the Court and people of quality. Some have gone to Bourbon and others to Vichy, and to Bourbonne—a spa near Lorraine. Others again have gone to Saint-Amand.

The Earl of Portland and King William III.

14th June, 1699, Saint-Cloud.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

The Archbishop of Cambrai is never mentioned now. I am very sorry that he won't have his romance *Télémaque* printed, because it is a very pleasant and agreeable book. I have read it in manuscript. It is thought that it will be printed in Holland. They wanted to print it here and one volume was already published, but as soon as the Archbishop heard of it he bought up all the copies and forbade them to print the rest. Someone lent me the manuscript in small instalments, and I was only allowed to have the next bit after I had finished with the preceding portion, and I also had to promise that I would not have it copied, otherwise I should certainly have taken a copy for you. Please Heaven, the instructions which the book contains may make an impression on the Duc de Bourgogne. If he follows them he will in time become a splendid king . . .

They think here that Lord Portland [1] will not leave King William's service, but will only give up his office as Chamberlain and any other offices he has near the King's person, but that he will keep his governorship and all the offices he holds in Holland. If he gave up everything I don't think he could live happily even with all his wealth, because men who have been employed in State affairs find time hang very heavily when they have nothing to do. But to remain in the midst of everything and thus continue to enjoy power, to be very wealthy and out of the clutches of the English, that cannot be called an unhappy fate.

They must be a wicked nation to approve of the assassination of their own kings, and I am very much afraid that King William may come to a sad end amongst such treacherous people.

If the King of Spain were to die we should have war without any doubt, but I can truthfully say that we shall not welcome it here, because we are all heartily sick of war . . .

Madame and the vices of the age.

23rd June, 1699, Saint-Cloud.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

The Comtes de Nassau seem to be fine lads. I hope that they will not learn any bad ways here. I am very proud of our good Germans for not having fallen into the horrible vice which is so much the fashion here that no one attempts to conceal it any longer. Young men are teased about such and such a fellow being smitten with them, just as in Germany we tease a young girl about getting married. Worse still, the women make love to each other, which I consider more disgusting than anything else . . .

My trip to Bar is very uncertain, because they are beginning to say now that it will cost a great deal and is an unnecessary expense . . .

A few years ago I used to know an old lady here called Madame de Fiennes, who was very simple-minded. One day a woman she knew died and Madame de Fiennes began to weep bitterly.

[1] When the Earl of Portland returned to England from his embassy to the Court of France he found his place of prime favourite to King William had been usurped by young Keppel. He resigned all his offices near the King's person, but continued to take an interest in politics until the King's death in 1702, when he retired to his estates in England and Holland.

Someone said to her: "You didn't show during her life that you were so very fond of the deceased, why do you weep so bitterly now that she is dead?" Madame de Fiennes replied: "Good Heavens! How stupid of you to think that I am mourning for that woman. I am not weeping for her but entirely for myself, because I, too, must die and her death has reminded me of the fact."

The chief topic of conversation here is the Councillor's wife who had her husband murdered, the courage with which she went to her execution and her horrible tortures, because the executioner struck her five or six times before he could get her head off. There was such an enormous crowd of people eager to be present at the execution that windows were rented at fifty golden Louis. She was called Madame Tiquet. She had had her horoscope read, and it predicted that she would attain a fabulous old age and would live very happily provided that she kept out of the hands of a man who bore the same name as herself. Her maiden name was Carlier, and now it appears that the executioner who cut off her head had the same name. Isn't that really remarkable? . . .

Madame lectures two young Counts.

26th June, 1699, Saint-Cloud.

To the RAUGRAVINE AMELIA-ELISABETH.

The young Comtes de Nassau visited me yesterday at Port Royal. I only saw them for a moment because I had a great deal of writing to do that day to Nancy and Modena, but all the same I lectured them severely, to the great joy of their governor, for it appears the young men wouldn't listen to him. They were quite sheepish, but it was only a very trifling matter: they wanted to carry canes, which are not at all suitable for young boys, so I had them taken from them.

Madame's husband and her artistic son.

26th June, 1699, Port Royal.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

I am sure that if Monsieur were not so weak-willed and if the wicked people he is so fond of didn't persuade him to believe

everything they wish, he would be the best fellow in the world. So he is to be pitied rather than hated when he behaves badly to me.

My son is very intelligent, and I am sure you would enjoy his conversation. He is well read in all sorts of subjects and has a good memory, and he can pass on what he knows without a trace of pedantry. He only uses noble expressions when he talks, but his ideals are not high enough. He prefers the society of common people such as artists and musicians to that of people of quality . . .

At present he is working hard on your behalf and is painting you a picture, the subject of which is borrowed from mythology, because everything he does is very historical. That gives him an excuse for going off early to Paris to paint, but, between ourselves, there is a girl aged sixteen, very pretty and an actress, who, from what I hear, comes to his studio. If this chit is his model for Antigone, she is certainly beautiful . . .

Atheism and suicide.

2nd July, 1699, Marly.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

Religion is so dead in this country that all the young men desire to be considered atheists, but what is stranger is that the same people who are atheists at Paris play pious at Court. It is maintained also that all the cases of suicide, and lately we have had a great many, are the result of atheism . . .

Last Monday, moreover, a lawyer shot himself in his bed. He was a brother of Monsieur Dodart, who is the Princesse de Conti's doctor, and professes to be a religious man. The lawyer was in bed with his wife, but before daybreak he got up. "Where are you going?" she asked. "I hear someone knocking at the door," he replied. "Well, then," said his wife, "let us send the servant to see who it is." The servant went but found no one there, and his wife said: "It was nothing, you see." The husband got back into bed, but in a few minutes rose again. This wakened the wife and she got angry and said to him: "What is the matter with you to-night. It is impossible to sleep with you," and she got up and went to bed in another room. Towards morning she heard a pistol shot in her husband's room. She tried to enter, but found the door shut,

and had to have it forced. Then she saw her husband dead in bed, still holding the pistol in his hand. He had put a bullet through his brain . . .

Madame de Maintenon takes rank as Queen.

19*th July*, 1699, Port Royal.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

I asked Monsieur how it comes about that I am only offered a foot-stool when visiting the Dame. He says that no one at all has an armchair, not even the Dauphin or the Duc de Bourgogne, because the King goes there so often. That is an excellent excuse for not allowing anyone a chair except the lady,[1] who is allowed one because of her bad health. In this way nothing is said as to whether she is the Queen or not, but at the same time she takes her rank . . .

Madame's opinion of the Dauphin.

23*rd July*, 1699, Port Royal.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

I consider Monseigneur[2] unhappy because, properly speaking, he isn't interested in anything. He hunts constantly, but is just as pleased to have his horse amble along at a walking pace for three or four hours on end, without uttering a word to a soul, as to have an exciting chase. If he ever succeeds to the Throne things will go as badly as you expect, because he is capable of taking a violent dislike to the people his favourites disparage, and his best friends are a bad lot.

Besides, he goes in fear of hell fire, and all sorts of hypocrites will get hold of him when he is King and wax more in favour than ever. To judge from the sort of people who are intimate with this gentleman I do not think the country will be any happier under his reign than it is under that of his father. I don't think he has any more respect for honest and sincere people than he has for rogues and deceivers, which most of his friends are.

It is poverty that has forced so many people to commit

[1] Madame de Maintenon.
[2] The Dauphin.

suicide, and there is no hope of its ending soon because the son is even fonder of money than the father is. As for the Duchesse de Bourgogne, she cannot possibly tire of the life, because they let her do anything she likes, whatever it may be. Sometimes she goes driving, sometimes she rides on a donkey. She wanders about all night alone in the garden. In fact, she does whatever that comes into her head. To be sure, she is very clever and she fears me and behaves very politely to me. Once or twice she tried to joke at my expense, but I put her sternly back in her place, and since then she dare not attempt it before me . . .

Madame's likes and dislikes.

24th July, 1699, Saint-Cloud.

To the RAUGRAVINE AMELIA-ELISABETH.

Hunting wild rabbits is never very exciting. The little animals with which they hunt them are not weasels, they are called ferrets. They are larger than weasels with a more pointed muzzle and their fur is much darker. I don't like rabbits, and I much prefer English cookery to French. I haven't been able to get used to it, and as I cannot eat stews nor any sort of soup, either thick or clear, I only eat a very few dishes, such as leg of mutton, roast chicken, veal, kidney, beef and salads. In Holland I used to eat plovers' eggs, but once I ate so many that I brought them all back and I have never touched them since . . .

Madame visits her aunt in a convent.

6th August, 1699, Marly.

To the RAUGRAVINE AMELIA.

I have already been to St. Germain to-day to take leave of the Royal family, because my trip to Bar, which has been so often settled and then put off, is at last going to eventuate, that is, at least, unless something new that it is impossible to foresee should arise between now and Sunday . . .

I have again visited my aunt, the Abbesse de Maubuisson, and I found her, God be thanked, even more alert and cheerful than last time. She is gayer and more lively than I am, and her sight and hearing are better than mine, although she is

just thirty years older. She was seventy-seven years old on April 1st. She is painting a beautiful picture for her sister, my dear Electress of Brunswick. It represents the Golden Calf, after the style of Poussin. She is worshipped in the convent, where she leads a very severe but peaceful life. She never eats meat unless she is seriously ill, and she sleeps on a mattress as hard as a board. There are only cane chairs in her chamber, and she gets up at midnight in order to pray. She remembers English better than German, because every day she has English visitors and, moreover, there are English nuns in her convent . . .

Mademoiselle de Malauge told me about Madame de Mazarin's[1] death. She died calmly but not in a very edifying frame of mind. Saint-Evremond is very much upset about it, people say, but he will soon follow her because he has nearly reached the age of ninety, if, indeed, he hasn't passed it . . .

It is a very common thing in France for women to get drunk and Madame de Mazarin has left a daughter, the Marquise de Richelieu, who is an expert at it.

Madame shows France in a dismal light.

10*th August*, 1699, Saint-Cloud.

To the RAUGRAVINE AMELIA-ELISABETH.

I have to laugh at you when you write *Monssigneur* instead of Monseigneur le Dauphin. We used to laugh at the kind, good and dear departed Dauphiness too, and we often teased her because she always used to say Monsegnieur . . . Schwalbach must be a charming and pleasant place if you can live as you like there without anyone finding fault with all you do. You

[1] The Duchesse de Mazarin had been in England since 1676. Charles II, during his exile in France before the Restoration, had been attracted by her beauty and fortune, and became a suitor for her hand, but she would have none of him. When, however, it became impossible for her to live in France and all other refuges failed her, she came to London and threw herself on Charles's bounty. He received her warmly, and gave her a pension of four thousand pounds and the use of a residence in St. James's Palace. Here she held court, and gathered round herself those French *literati* who for one reason or another found themselves in London. Amongst these the chief was Saint-Evremond. When William III came to the throne he reduced her pension by half, and allowed her to live in Chelsea. Here her salon gradually became the resort of gamesters, and her last years were spent in an orgy of desperate gambling. At the time of her death she was very deeply in debt.

wouldn't find such a place in France. Let the French ladies laugh as much as they like at your innocent pleasures. They have no real joy in their lives. In order to be sure of that one has only to see them at their gambling, which goes on the entire twenty-four hours. What despair there is on their faces . . . Such is their idea of pleasure here, but it is not mine. I should prefer to picnic on the grass beside a stream as you do with good friends, such as you and Louisa, and Mesdames Degenfeld and Schelm . . .

Where this country is worse than England is that the worst-living men and women are all intriguers and want to be popular at Court, which leads to deceit and treachery. Nothing is discussed here but tragic adventures, and before long five more women are going to be brought to justice for having murdered their husbands. Others have taken their own lives . . .

Etiquette prevents an excursion.

18*th August*, 1699, Saint-Cloud.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

My journey to Bar has fallen through! Although I know the ways of this country well enough, and know that I must never count on anything that might give me pleasure, yet I confess I thought that this expedition would really take place, since the first relays have already been sent on in advance. But the Devil, who can never resist doing me a mischief, has put forward an accursed point of etiquette which has done me out of my trip entirely . . .

Details of life at Court.

16*th September*, 1699, Fontainebleau.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

My daughter is happy, thank God, in her marriage with the Duc de Lorraine. The only trouble is that she is home-sick, and she is afraid that her husband will not take her with him when he has to come here to be invested with the Duchy of Bar. I don't know why my daughter is so keen to come back here. But it is in the blood of French people—they all want to return to Paris . . .

No young girl could be more simply brought up than the three princes are. Every evening at nine o'clock the two younger ones are sent to bed, although the Duc d'Anjou is already sixteen years old and the Duc de Berri thirteen. The latter would be wide enough awake if they would let him. He is a very nice child and always so merry. His eldest brother is intelligent but not lively like he is. They say that he frets because he is so badly made. I feel quite upset at the idea. The Duc d'Anjou has an excellent nature, but is not very good-looking. It is to be hoped that the Duchesse de Bourgogne, who has a very pretty figure, will give it to her children. This last year she has become much steadier, and no longer behaves in a childish fashion at table, but acts like a grown-up . . . Madame de Maintenon had a bad headache yesterday, and the Duchesse de Bourgogne as usual spent the whole day with her. She is never to be found in her own room, because she is always visiting that creature. As for Madame de Maintenon, I did not send to enquire after her, because she is the only person in the whole country who hasn't congratulated me on the birth of my grandson, and she hasn't mentioned it to me. Since she is so little concerned about me, it is only fair that I shouldn't worry very much about her.

At Saint-Cloud I saw a picture of the Elector of Brandenbourg. He has a beautiful face. Perhaps he was deformed by accident and not from birth, because I have heard it said that when anyone's figure is deformed by an accident, such as a fall or something like that, it doesn't mean that their children will be deformed . . .

In my opinion the Hunter [1] is the most incomprehensible man in the world. He is not at all stupid and yet he behaves as if he were. That is because of his dulness and indifference.

The wanderings abroad of the Protestants.

23rd September, 1699, Fontainebleau.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

The poor Protestants are much to be pitied because they haven't found safety in Copenhagen, when they thought they had found a refuge there. Those who are established in Germany will spread the French language there. Monsieur Colbert, it

[1] One of Madame's names for the Dauphin.

seems, used to say that to have many subjects was a source of wealth to kings and princes, and he wanted everyone to marry and have children. So these new subjects will be a source of wealth to the electors and the German princes.

The death of the Queen of Portugal.

1*st October*, 1699, Fontainebleau.

To the RAUGRAVINE AMELIA-ELISABETH.

I don't know whether the Queen of Portugal is entirely to be pitied. I think it is better for her to die than to remain Queen of such a country and to have to live with that King . . . They say that he gave her, if you will excuse my saying so, the French disease, and that she died of it, because when one has that illness badly the least scratch will cause one's death.

Points of etiquette.

1*st November*, 1699, Fontainebleau.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

The King would not consent to a compromise in the matter of the difficulty about the ceremonial. The Duc de Lorraine demanded an armchair when visiting Monsieur and me because the Emperor had granted him one. The King replied that the Emperor had his ceremonial etiquette and he had his. Thus the Emperor grants an armchair to cardinals, while they may not be seated in the presence of the King . . . Monsieur was willing to allow him a chair with a back to it and the King consented to that, but the Duc thought he should be treated like an Elector, and the King would not consent to that. Then Monsieur proposed that they should do as the King of England does. He grants no armchairs, but we on our side expect them, so when we are there he only sits upon a stool . . . The King, however, wouldn't hear of that, so rather than put an affront upon the Duc we have given up our journey to Bar . . .

I hear that Charles-Maurice gets as drunk as a fiddler every day . . . From whom does he get that? because papa never drank in his life. I am heartbroken that my dead father's only surviving son should be a drunkard . . . I see in the *Gazette de Holland* that they have begun to rebuild Heidelberg; tell me

if it is true . . . I am afraid I shall never see my little grandson with my own eyes, but my daughter has promised to send me a wax model of him. I don't know whether we shall go into mourning for the King of Denmark, because it is only worn when they have sent us notice of the death. But it is doubtful whether they will send us this notice, because the reigning King wished to make changes in the etiquette and to write to the King using different formulas from those his father and grandfather used. The King would not accept this letter, so their ambassador cannot have an audience.

The respect demanded by Madame de Maintenon.

1*st November*, 1699, Fontainebleau.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

Probably the Maintenon is not treated by the Queen of England as a queen. She herself does not wish to be treated as one, at least so far as rank is concerned, but she wishes to be shown as much or even more respect than a queen. She expects to be consulted about everything, and nothing must be done except by her advice and at her command. That doesn't suit me at all. If she had continued to allow me, as of old, to depute her to tell the King things I could not tell him myself, then I should have perhaps been compliant enough to tell her everything and follow her advice. But how can she expect me to do so when she has induced the King to forbid me publicly, before all the courtiers assembled in the Queen's chamber, ever again to give her any message for him? I have obeyed the King's commands, there is nothing to grumble at in that, and if the King had ordered me to approach her again I should have done it, but I don't think she should have a grudge against me because I carry out the King's orders.

In my opinion a prince could quite well be an ecclesiastic without living alone like a barbarian. A man who is destined to be a ruler some day has more need of a knowledge of mankind than a man who is to become a hermit, so I think they are quite wrong to bring up the Bishop of Osnabrück so badly.

The design of the Palace of Versailles.

5th November, 1699, Port Royal.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

The King himself acknowledges that there are faults in the architecture of Versailles. This happened because the King did not at first intend to build such a large palace, but only to enlarge a little castle which was on the spot. Afterwards, however, the place charmed him, and he couldn't live there without having much more accommodation. So instead of having the little castle entirely pulled down and making a vast new building he saved the old castle by building all around it, thus covering it with, as it were, a beautiful new cloak, but this spoilt the whole thing.

The price of a wanton.

13th November, 1699, Paris.

To the RAUGRAVINE AMELIA.

I am sure they must have made fun of the Prince de Birkenfeld, because he carries about the portrait of Fanchon [1] in his pocket. Everyone laughs at him here for having made a heroine of a common wanton. I told him right smartly what I thought about it, but it does no good, young people must have their fling. These bare-necked trollops are more expensive than virtuous women. As for Fanchon, her price is well known. She costs more than a thousand pistoles, because the Grand Prieur de Vendôme keeps her, and he is very jealous. They say that he beats her when he hears of any of her escapades, so others have to pay for the blows. Still, the Prince de Birkenfeld [2] may have her cheaper because she is greatly attracted by him.

[1] Mademoiselle Moreau, a well-known actress at the Opera.

[2] Philippe, brother of the Duc de Vendôme and grandson of the natural son of Henri IV and Gabrielle d'Estrées.

SOPHIA, ELECTRESS OF
HANOVER.

The King of Morocco wants to marry a French princess.

27th December, 1699, Paris.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

The King of Morocco has written a very long letter to our King proposing an insulting and impossible alliance. He says that his ambassadors have told him about a beautiful princess who lives in France. He has forgotten her name, to be sure, but at the ball Monsieur gave at the Palais-Royal she was sitting at the left hand of the Duc de Chartres. He was assured that she is a widow and a king's daughter, and he hopes that the King will not refuse to give her to him . . . As soon as he has the King's consent he will go on board a ship and come to fetch the princess himself, because from the ambassadors' account alone he has fallen madly in love with her. You can see that he means the Princesse de Conti. Her whole life has been very romantic, and to complete the romance it only needs the King of Morocco to have her carried off and our knights-errant to go and rescue her.

A remedy for smallpox.

21st January, 1700, Marly.

To the RAUGRAVINE AMELIA.

When my daughter had smallpox I used nothing but your remedy. It succeeded very well, and she hasn't the slightest mark . . . I stayed with her night and day so that she could not scratch herself. She is now well and back with her husband at Nancy, and their love for each other is greater than ever . . .

It certainly isn't a fairy story about the King of Morocco's having asked for the Princesse de Conti in marriage; but the King firmly refused. The Princess was very beautiful before she had smallpox, but since then she is greatly changed. She still has a perfect figure and queenly carriage, however, and dances to perfection.

I can understand a person going to Rome as did my uncle, the Landgrave of Cassell, to see the antiquities, but not going there in order to watch the mummeries of the priests. Nothing is more wearying. Some people perhaps go to have a look at the thirty thousand prostitutes. But anyone who is inquisitive

about such things need only come to France and he will find just as many.

Presents from the King.

27th January, 1700, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

During the first five years I spent in France the King gave me no presents. But since the sixth year he has given me something every year, except for the time I was being punished for not wishing to sell my children. Since then he has started giving them again. At first three thousand pistols, then two thousand, and the last six years only one thousand.

History told in songs.

11th February, 1700, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

I have a large collection of songs that the dear Grande Mademoiselle gave me before she died, and they are very amusing. At the late Monsieur's Court there were many witty people who used to make them, and there are people in Paris who have ten or twelve volumes of old songs which they preserve carefully. In France every epoch of history can be studied in this way, because everything is celebrated in song. The history of everyone at Court can be learnt from ballads better than from books, because in the latter people are always flattered, while the songs tell of events as they really happened, and, just as in Roman history, we depend upon medals, so in this country the truth is known from the songs. They are, therefore, not as useless as people would have us believe. . . .

There are two reasons why respect for rank is completely disappearing. First, Monseigneur doesn't care a scrap for anything, and however great the liberties that people take with him, he never rebukes them. In the second place, Lansquenet has a great deal to do with it. They want people who can play for high stakes, but people of high rank are not the wealthiest, so that they are willing to play with all sorts of riff-raff, provided that they have money. They allow all the women, even the chambermaids, to make stakes, and to enable them to go on playing they are made to sit down, that means that ladies of

quality cannot remain standing, so everybody sits down without distinction of rank or quality. Everything is topsy-turvy. The King still retains his politeness, but with almost this sole exception this quality is entirely banished from the Court.

The medical treatment of a sick child.

23rd May, 1700, Versailles.

To the Raugravine Louisa.

Probably you have already heard that God has taken my little grandson, the Prince de Lorraine, back to Himself. It was the Duke's doctor who killed the child. He was big and strong, but he had convulsions because four teeth were coming through at the same time. The doctor gave him, in the space of four hours, four washings out of chicory water and rhubarb, one powder to stop the convulsions, large quantities of treacle water, and some English drops. The child must have been suffocated.

A jeu d'esprit by Molière.

6th June, 1700, Saint-Cloud.

To the Duchess of Hanover.

The religious party are now too powerful in France, and will not allow a book to be printed which holds them up to ridicule. They had forbidden the performance of *Tartuffe* on this principle, and Monsieur de Lamoignon, who was then Premier President, had the reputation of being very hypocritical. Molière came on to the stage and said, " The Premier President has forbidden the performance of *Le Tartuffe*. He does not want anyone to play the hypocrite any longer." This sally made everyone laugh, because it was evident that Molière had worded his announcement like that on purpose. . . .

The German book gives the story of a blow the Prince of Wales is supposed to have given Monseigneur. There is not a word of truth in it. The Berlips woman[1] should have stayed in

[1] The Comtesse de Berlips was a German who had a great deal of influence over the Queen of Spain, who was a sister of the Elector of Bavaria. Charles II of Spain named the Prince Electoral as his heir, but later changed his Will. When Louis accepted the throne for the Duc d'Anjou, the Comtesse de Berlips thought it wise to flee the country, taking with her the great wealth she had amassed in Spain.

Paris several days and then she would have come to see me, but as soon as she heard the announcement the King had made as to the King of Spain's successor, she would not even sleep in Paris, but went straight on and arrived at a village in the neighbourhood of Paris, called Bondy, along with the Comte de Sintzendorff and the Marquise d'Harcourt, and she sent a message by the latter to say that she was very sorry not to have been able to speak to me. She travels with a large retinue.

Madame deplores the behaviour of her son.

9th June, 1700, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

Besides his marriage, my son causes me much pain by his continual disobedience. Whenever I ask him not to do a particular thing he does it several times under my nose. . . . What distresses me most about his conduct is that I am the only person who cannot gain his goodwill. He is amiable to everyone else, but I have lost his affection by continually lecturing him for his own good. I have now made up my mind how to act, and I never say anything to him at all, and only converse with him on trivial subjects, just as I should with the next comer; but I feel very sad at not being able to open my heart to those I love. This miserable situation is one reason why I lead such a quiet life. As I cannot live intimately with my son, anything else is galling to me, and I prefer to be left alone. I read, write, and amuse myself with my medals, go driving and sometimes hunting, and thus time passes, not very pleasantly, to be sure, but at least without trouble as long as I keep well.

A German visitor to the Court of France.

10*th July*, 1700, Saint-Cloud.

To the MARGRAVE FRIEDRICH MAGNUS VON BADEN-DURLACH.

Yesterday I had the honour of seeing your son.[1] I found him very polite, lively, and in good health, and I am sure that he will

[1] The Margrave Cristof, youngest son of the Margrave Friedrich Magnus von Baden-Durlach, was paying a visit to Paris. His father was a suitor for the hand of the young Princess Charlotte-Elizabeth before she married Monsieur.

get on very well here, and I earnestly hope that I shall be able to be of service to him. I have already taken the liberty of correcting him a little in his speech, but he is getting on so well that I do not think I shall find much else to correct. I have asked Monsieur to present your son to the King, the Dauphin, and the Duc and Duchesse de Bourgogne, because I am unable to make the journey from Fontainebleau to Versailles, and he has promised to do so.

The health of King Louis XIV.

18*th July*, 1700, Saint-Cloud.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

King James is always saying that he does not approve of religious freedom being withheld, and he maintains that that has always been his maxim. . . . The worthy King is unhappy because his true sentiments are not known. We still live on good terms with these royalties, but we do everything that King William wants us to. I agree with you that the King of Spain will probably outlive those who have helped themselves to his succession. Our King, thank Heaven, is very well now. He looks better than he did two years ago, and often goes on foot as far as Marly, when he has not got gout. I expect that keeps him in good health, but he does one thing that I do not in the least approve of. I mean his habit of purging himself once a month, and taking very strong medicines. That seems to me to be a very wretched way to live.

An aspirant to the throne of Spain.

25*th July*, 1700, Saint-Cloud.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

The Duc d'Anjou has quite the air of a King of Spain, being extraordinarily grave and serious-minded. He speaks very slowly, walks with a measured tread, and is, in short, a typical King of Spain. That is a throne which would not have suited my dear Duc de Berri very well. I should have preferred to see him succeeding to it, because, although the Duc d'Anjou may be the best prince in the world, his younger brother is of a much more genial disposition.

The Duchesse d'Uzes dies of a loathsome disease.

27th July, 1700, Port-Royal.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

I have been indisposed with a sort of cholera which gave me diarrhœa and vomiting, but they say that I shall be all the better after it. . . . Last week we had a horrible scandal here. The Duchesse d'Uzes died, simply rotten with (excuse my mentioning it) the French disease. She was a daughter of the Prince of Monaco, and a good, kind, and virtuous woman. It was her wretched husband, whom she adored, who got her into this state. I cannot understand how she could possibly love him. He is hideous, stinks like a goat, and gets drunk every day. He drinks with lackeys, and does even worse things with them, which is probably how he caught such a horrible disease.

A rumour that disturbed ambitions.

29th July, 1700, Marly.

To the RAUGRAVINE AMELIA-ELISABETH.

To-day we have had an exciting piece of news which will, if true, make lots of people look cheap. It is that the Queen of Spain is two months with child.

A historian of the Palatinate.

20th August, 1700, Port-Royal.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

I do not know Monsieur Tolner,[1] but pray thank him on my behalf for his intention of sending me his book. If it is in Latin I shall not be able to understand it, unless he will have the charity to translate it for me . . . If I could read the history of the Palatinate it would be a most acceptable present.

[1] Author of *Historia Palatina.*

The recall of an ambassador.

26th August, 1700, Saint-Cloud

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

Yesterday we learnt that the King had sent Monsieur de Monaco to Cardinal de Bouillon [1] to order him to resign his charge, and to take back from him the order of the Saint-Esprit, and to have taken down the royal arms which he has on his house at Rome. At the same time the King forbids not only the French cardinals, but also all French subjects resident in Rome to visit the cardinal or even to speak to him.

Monsieur de Monaco told the cardinal that he regretted very much having to be the bearer of such a grievous message, but that he could not refuse to execute the King's formal command. The cardinal made no reply but "I receive the King's orders with respect." Monsieur de Monaco said to him, "But what are you going to do about your resignation? Tell me what reply I must take back." "I receive the King's orders with respect," replied the cardinal, and whatever Monsieur de Monaco said to him or asked him he could get no other reply from him but "I receive the King's orders with respect." As soon as Monsieur de Monaco had departed the cardinal sent an express off post haste to the King. We do not know yet what message he brought, and in the meantime the affair is causing a great sensation here, as you can imagine. Everyone is impatient to discover what was in the cardinal's message. I hope that Monsieur will be able to tell us this evening, because he is going to Marly to dine with the King.

[1] Emmanuel-Theodose de la Tour d'Auvergne, Cardinal de Bouillon, a nephew of Turenne. His pride and pretentiousness made him very unpopular. In 1698 he went as Ambassador to Rome, where he also acted as Dean of the Sacred College. The dispute about Quietism was then at its height, and he had orders to obtain the condemnation of Fénelon. Instead of doing so, he worked in his favour and was recalled to Paris. He replied that his presence at Rome was necessitated by his duties to the College, and refused to return. For this behaviour his possessions were confiscated and he was exiled from Court. He retired to his Abbey of Tournus.

Madame sends her portrait.

21st September, 1700, Port-Royal.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

I am going to entrust the Abbé Teseu with a little souvenir of the fête at Saint-Cloud, so that he can carry it to you. You will find painted on it a coarse old pagoda of a woman. It is a very good likeness. I am sure you could not show it to anyone without their recognising it immediately. But, seriously, I have never had a better portrait painted.

The stutter of King James II.

6th October, 1700, Fontainebleau.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

The King and Queen of England talked about you the whole time. . . . The worthy King had tears in his eyes, so dearly does he love you. He raised his hands and said, "O, O, O, pou pour cela, eh, eh, eh, elle me ma tou toujours aimée." You see he stutters worse than ever.

The King of Sweden's accident.

6th November, 1700, Marly.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

I asked Monsieur d'Avaux confidentially if it be true about the trouble that has overtaken the King of Sweden as a result of his fall from his horse. He says that the King did indeed have a very bad fall and was very badly hurt, and that when his grandmother urged him to marry he begged her instantly never to mention such a thing to him. Afterwards he must have had a private talk with the Queen, because she never says a single word on the subject. All this leads people to suppose that he was so badly hurt by his accident that he is no longer of any use for marriage, but Monsieur d'Avaux does not know whether the trouble is incurable. . . . My son has such a genius for everything to do with painting that Goypel, who was his master, says that other painters should be glad that he is a great nobleman, because if he were a common man he would outshine them all.

The death of the King of Spain.

10*th November*, 1700, Fontainebleau.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

To-day I have to give you the important news which arrived yesterday of the death of the King of Spain. It has been expected, however, for a long time. They say the Queen is prostrated with grief. Our King has received a copy of the will, and the Duc d'Anjou has been appointed heir. A Spanish grandee is to depart immediately to take the original to the Duc d'Anjou and request him to become King. In the event of the King's refusal, the Spanish grandee has orders to hasten to Vienna to offer the crown to the Emperor. In consequence, I imagine that they are a little embarrassed by the treaty they have made with England and Holland. I am assured that yesterday the King took the Pantocrat [1] with him quite openly to his Council, which struck the courtiers as unusual.

A detailed description of the new King of Spain.

13*th November*, 1700, Fontainebleau.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

Yesterday everyone went about whispering, "The King has accepted the crown of Spain for the Duc d'Anjou, but keep it secret!" I kept the secret, but at the chase when I heard the Duc d'Anjou coming up behind me in a narrow path, I stopped and said to him, "Pass, O King! Let your Majesty pass." I wish you could have seen the dear child's astonishment. He could not make out how I could have heard the news. His brother, the Duc de Berri, laughed fit to burst his sides, but the other put on the airs of a King of Spain. He seldom laughs, and has always a very solemn air. It is supposed that the King told him yesterday that he was to be King, but that he was not to let it be known. He was playing at ombre in his room at the time, and he could not sit still in his chair. Although, to be sure, he said nothing, he leapt up and then sat down again gravely as before, as if he had heard nothing. He is not as lively and intelligent as his brother, but has other excellent qualities. He is kind-hearted and generous—which is not characteristic of

[1] Madame de Maintenon.

his family. He is truthful, moreover, and would not tell a lie for anything. He will be a man of his word, also, and he is brave and sympathetic. In short, he is a really fine character of a nobleman who has no vice in him. If he were an ordinary gentleman, people would say that he was an excellent fellow, and I should think that he will make the people around him happy. He will probably be as strong as the King of Poland, because a year ago the strongest man here could not make him close his fist. In appearance he is a thorough Austrian, with his mouth always open. I have told him about it hundreds of times, and being of a docile nature he always shuts it when he is told, but as soon as he forgets he opens it again. He talks very little except to me, because I give him no peace. I tease him unceasingly, so he is used to speaking to me. His voice is loud, and he talks very slowly. I can't resist poking fun at him occasionally, but I like him better than the Duc de Bourgogne, because he is not so haughty and is altogether handsomer.

The young Duc de Berri ; and Spanish acting.

But the Prince that I love as well as if he were my own son is the Duc de Berri. He is a charming youngster and always so gay. At table he tells me all sorts of funny things. Thus he said to me the other day, " I am very unfortunate. Not only have I no chance of being a king like my brothers, but with the departure of my brother, the Duc d'Anjou, all the governors and under-governors will fall to my lot, and since those I have already are quite too much for me, I do not know what will become of me when I have all the others. It is to be hoped that they will succeed in making me perfect." This was not said in a peevish voice, but with a laugh. That is enough about the Princes for the time being . . . When our Queen was alive, I often used to go to see Spanish plays, and although I did not understand a word of Spanish, that did not prevent me from knowing that there were several of the actors who acted extremely well, and their dances with the harp and castanets used to amuse me very much. But when we went behind the screens where the actors were waiting, they smelt so horribly of garlic that we simply could not stand it.

The announcement of the Duke's accession to the Spanish throne.

18th November, 1700, Paris.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

On Tuesday morning the King sent for the Duc d'Anjou to come to his cabinet, and said to him, " You are King of Spain." Then he introduced to him the Spanish ambassadors, and all the Spaniards who live here. They all threw themselves at their King's feet, and kissed his hand one after the other, and then ranged themselves behind him. Then our King led the young King of Spain into the great hall, where the whole Court was assembled, and said, " Gentlemen ! Behold the King of Spain ! Salute him ! " Immediately a great cry of joy arose, and everyone came to kiss the young King's hand. When that was done, our King gave his hand to his grandson and said, " Let us return thanks to God. Will your Majesty come to Mass ? "

There the King made the new ruler kneel at his right hand on his stool, and after the Mass led him to his own apartment. His two brothers came afterwards to visit him, and my Duc de Berri was so overcome with joy that he kissed the hand of his brother, the King of Spain. That evening the latter drove to Meudon to visit his father, who is staying there. Monseigneur came to meet him as far as the antechamber. He had just been in the garden, and hadn't expected his son, the King of Spain, to arrive so early, so he was quite out of breath. " I can see clearly," he said, " that one should never make any vows, because I could have promised myself that I should never lose my breath hurrying to meet my son, the Duc d'Anjou, but here I am quite panting." The young King was quite distressed to find himself treated as a foreign King by his father, who accompanied him to his carriage when he was due to leave. Yesterday Monseigneur returned his son's visit, and we also went to Versailles, where we met Monseigneur with the Princesse de Conti and all her lady friends returning to Meudon. I have never seen the Dauphin as much moved in his life as he is by this affair, and he seems to rejoice sincerely at his son becoming King.

The ceremonial departure of the King of Spain.

5th December, 1700, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

Now I am going to tell you about the sad day we spent yesterday, and how we took leave of the dear King of Spain. At nine o'clock in the morning we were all in our rooms preparing, and at ten o'clock we accompanied the King to the King of Spain's rooms. Then to Mass at the tribune. It may have been the music that softened our hearts, but everyone began to weep. After Mass we ascended the great staircase, which was full of people, as was the courtyard. The old Princesse de Conti and my son accompanied the young King only as far as his carriage, because they were not coming with us to Sceaux. There were eight of us in the King's carriage; the two Kings had the Duchesse de Bourgogne between them; the Duc de Berri was between the Dauphin and the Duc de Bourgogne, and Monsieur and I sat with our backs to the doors. All the way here to Sceaux the road was lined with people on foot, on horseback, or in carriages. The King was escorted by his guards, outriders and men-at-arms, and at Sceaux there were two companies of musketeers. The avenue at Sceaux is very long, longer than from here to Trianon, and it was packed on both sides with carriages three deep, which had been drawn up at the side to allow the King of Spain to pass. They reckon that, not counting the King's carriages and those of all the courtiers who followed him, there were more than two thousand at Sceaux. In the front row alone, in the first square between the courtyard and the avenue, I myself counted more than fifty.

As soon as we alighted at Sceaux, which, by the way, belongs to the Duc du Maine now, because he bought it from the young Seignelay, the King retired into a private room with the King of Spain and ordered that no one should follow them. We all remained with Monsieur and his two other sons in the drawing room. A quarter of an hour later the King sent for the Spanish ambassador, who stayed a short time in the chamber. When he had retired, the King called the Dauphin, who also stayed a quarter of an hour. The King next sent for the Duc de Bourgogne and his wife, the Duc de Berri, Monsieur and me, and we took our leave of the King of Spain. The three brothers sobbed as if their hearts would break. We stayed a quarter of an hour;

then the King sent for the Princes and Princesses of the Blood, who took their leave of the King of Spain. Everyone was weeping and sobbing. The Dauphin, who is usually so calm, was terribly distressed, and embraced his son so tenderly that I still weep when I think of it. I thought both father and son would die of grief, so deeply affected were they. The young King also embraced me very affectionately, but I was so overcome that I could not say a single word. At length the King said, "Go and see if everything is ready." Soon a voice was heard shouting, "Sire, all is ready!" "So much the worse," exclaimed the King of Spain. We embraced once more. The good little Duc de Berri was sobbing with all his heart, but the Duc de Bourgogne hardly wept at all, though his eyes were red. Our King accompanied the King of Spain as far as the end of the room. Sobs were heard everywhere, and nothing could be seen but handkerchiefs drying wet eyes. Men as well as women wept bitterly, those who were going away as well as those who were staying behind.

As soon as the King of Spain had left with his brothers, the Dauphin got into his chaise and returned to Meudon; our King went in a little carriage with the Duchesse de Bourgogne; Monsieur and I went for a drive and explored Sceaux, which has a magnificent garden. Before the house there is a large flower garden laid out in beds. From this garden one enters a beautiful gallery full of pictures and marble figures. From the centre of this gallery one returns to the garden, where a long alley extends as far as one can see. Beside this alley there is a beautiful bowling-green. Another alley leads to a canal, which is much longer than the one at Fontainebleau, and arises from a beautiful large fountain. In all the flower gardens there are great fountains, and what took my fancy even more is a little wood near the house for walking in, the beauty of which is enhanced by several springs and fountains. One of them represents Æoleus chaining the Zephyr, with four other winds at the corners. He threatens these with his sceptre, but the one he is trying to bind seems to blow in spite of him. All five spout water. Opposite this fountain is Scylla surrounded by dogs. It is one mass of dogs' heads all barking and spouting water. These two fountains are of very beautifully worked bronze. Next there are two white marble fountains representing children spouting water. There are two other bronze statues of little satyrs. All the paths in this wood are bordered with antique

marble busts. After the King had taken the Duchesse of Bourgogne for a drive he brought her back to the house, where the Duc du Maine had prepared a splendid collation. I was not at all hungry, so I stayed with Monsieur and the King, and we continued to walk about. There is one spot, called the *cabinet de Lacerere*, which has a platform decorated with beautiful pictures. From there one goes into a broad walk, where there is a beautiful statue of Diana in bronze. From this place there is a magnificent view. At another place, where there is an equally fine view, there is a gladiator in bronze. Everything is very ornate, and the house is magnificently furnished.

CHAPTER XI.

1701—1702.

A New Invention.

27th February, 1701, Versailles.

To the RAUGRAVE CHARLES-MAURICE.

I cannot understand how your printing machine is made, because my aunt says you can put it in your pocket. It must be a new invention.

An affront to Madame by the King.

3rd March, 1701, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

On Sunday the King said to me before everyone, "Are you coming to the falconry to-morrow?" "Yes," I replied, "if your Majesty permits." "But how will you go?" he asked. I thought he was joking, and said, "I imagine that I shall go as I usually do, and that is with you." "Not so," he replied, "because I shall go alone in my carriage." "How will the Duchesse de Bourgogne go then?" I asked. "She will go in her carriage," replied the King. "Then, of course, I shall go with her." The King replied in a curt manner, "She is taking all the young ladies who ride, and I do not advise you to thrust yourself in amongst such young people." I replied, "Up to now I have never seen people of the rank of the Duchesse de Bourgogne riding in crowded carriages, and I confess that it would suit neither my figure nor my dignity. I remember the time when it was considered an honour to accompany people of our rank without regard to age where people like she and I are concerned, but since everything changes, and your Majesty does not think it proper for me to accompany him to-morrow, I shall

accept the invitation to hunt wolves that I had refused in order to have the honour of following you." The King said dryly, "That is what I should advise."

On Monday, therefore, I went hunting with Monseigneur, but we did not find a wolf, so the hunt was put off until the next day. The King couldn't go to the falconry either, and postponed his hunt also. In the evening he asked me again, with a mocking smile, "Are you coming to the flight to-morrow?" "To-morrow," I replied, "that would be difficult, because I have sent all my horses to sleep at St. Germain in order to hunt there." If the hunt had not been successful the King would have jeered at me, so I was very glad to be able to tell him in the evening that I had enjoyed myself very much. Moreover, I wouldn't keep quiet, and boasted of the hunt under pretext of praising the dogs of his beloved bastard.

Rumours of war.

24th March, 1701, Versailles.

To the Duchess of Hanover.

At Paris we can hardly make up our minds yet to believe that there will be a war. We go on talking about peace. They say that Milan is going to be given to the Emperor, Lorraine to our King, and that my Duc de Lorraine will become Comte de Flanders. I wish that this was true, for he would lose nothing by it.

The heiress to the throne of England.

17th April, 1701, Versailles.

To the Raugrave Charles-Maurice.

I have known for a long time that my aunt[1] was appointed heiress to the throne of England, and I wrote to her about it. I am very glad, because King William is a valetudinarian and Princess Anne is delicate. They say that she drinks too much wine and likes too strong wines, so I hope that our dear Electress will not have to wait too long before she is seated on her grandfather's throne.

[1] The Electress Sophia of Hanover.

Gossip of the Royal Household.

19*th April*, 1701, Paris.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

The King is fonder than ever of his old slut. Since his illness Monseigneur is afraid that he is going to die, and has become very melancholy. He has sent away his actress,[1] and gives her a pension of a thousand pistols, and at the jubilee she is to retire from the theatre. I am very much annoyed about it, because she is an excellent actress.

They say that the King of Spain is taking *Télémaque* for his model. I am told that he has read it through so often that he wants to be guided by it on every point, but in time he may find in Spain a Minerva who will rule him entirely.[2] My son has a blind devotion for his wife, which is unbelievable when one considers how little she bothers about him. He is intelligent, too, but still he does not see what goes on. As she doesn't object to his going constantly to Paris and leading an irregular life there, he is pleased with her. . . . The Prince[3] often engages in debauchery. . . . His son, the Duke, has a nobler mind and soul, and he is not so mean as his father, but he gets drunk every day, and is a very beast for brutality. His wife is clever and agreeable and gets on well with her husband and his family, but she deceives them all.

The Prince de Conti, who used to be so popular in France, is not liked at all now. . . . He is false and incredibly mean. He is head over heels in love with his sister-in-law, Madame la Duchesse.[4] However, his love for his sister-in-law does not prevent his loving his pages as well.

Monsieur du Maine pretends to be religious now. He is very clever, and knows how to be charming when he wishes, but he shuns everyone and is hardly ever seen. His wife is a woman of peculiar temper. She never goes to bed before four o'clock

[1] Françoise Petel Longchamp, called "La Raisin." Of the Dauphin's many mistresses she was the only one who bore him a child.

[2] Madame's prophecy came true in the person of Marie-Anne de La Tremoille, Princesse des Ursins, who accompanied Philippe V's wife to Spain in the capacity of duenna, and through Madame de Maintenon, with whom she carried on a very extensive correspondence, was the instrument by which Louis governed his grandson's kingdom.

[3] The eldest son of the Great Condé.

[4] Madame La Duchesse and the Princesse de Conti were daughters of Louis by Madame de Montespan and Mademoiselle de la Vallière respectively.

in the morning and gets up at three o'clock in the afternoon. She has a scholar called Monsieur de Malezieux for her lover. When someone told Monsieur du Maine that it made him look ridiculous to have Monsieur de Malezieux going to his wife's rooms in a dressing gown and night cap to teach her mathematics he replied, " Don't say anything against Malezieux to me. He keeps the peace in my house." The Comte de Toulouse[1] is rather stupid, but he is of good character and is very generous. The dowager Princesse de Conti lets the old hag know that she is ill, by her doctor, who is a creature of that woman, who every day sends her some new comfort and she is becoming as dried up as a stick. The wife of the Prince de Conti has fits of the vapours which amount almost to a folly. That is what the Royal Household is like.

Madame would rather be Elector than King of England.

15*th May*, 1701, Port Royal.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

All my life I have regretted being a woman, and to tell you the truth I should have done much better as Elector than as Madame. I should not antagonise the country as the reigning Elector does, and I should leave all religions perfectly unmolested. I would rather be Elector than King of England. . . . Neither the character of the English nor their Parliament would suit me, and I don't envy my aunt her succession, but she will doubtless know better than I should how to manage them.

The death of Monsieur.

12*th June*, 1701, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

Last Wednesday during the morning Monsieur was still quite well and hearty. He went to Marly and ate a hearty dinner with the King, then he went on to St. Germain, and returned here at six o'clock. He was in a high good humour, and told us how many important people he had seen on his visit to the Queen of England. Towards nine o'clock I was called to supper, but I

[1] The Comte de Toulouse was the younger son of King Louis and Madame de Montespan.

could eat nothing, as I had been feverish for four hours. Monsieur said, " I shall go and sup, and shall not do as you do, because I have a great appetite." Then he went to table. About half an hour afterwards I heard a great noise, and saw Madame de Ventadour come into my room, as pale as death. " Monsieur is ill," she said. I immediately rushed to his room. He knew me, it is true, but he could not speak so as to make himself understood. I could only make out the words, " You are ill ; go back to your room." They drew off his blood three times, gave him eleven ounces of emetic, some Shaffhouse water, and two bottles of English drops. But nothing was any use. Towards six o'clock in the morning it was plain that the end was near. I was dragged by force out of the room in an almost fainting condition. They put me to bed, but I could not stay there and got up again. . . . The King came to see me. He was very much moved, and did all he could to comfort me. He was very gracious to me. Madame de Maintenon likewise was very much upset and consoled me. The King took his departure, and at mid-day Monsieur died. I immediately entered my carriage and came here. The King sent to ask how I was. Terror had banished my fever. Madame de Maintenon sent word by my son that this was the appropriate moment to make my peace with the King. Thereupon I did some thinking. I remembered how often you had advised me to conciliate the lady herself. So I asked the Duc de Noailles to tell her from me that I was touched by all the kindness she had shown me in my sorrow, and that as I could not go out, I begged her to be so good as to take the trouble to come to see me. She did so yesterday at six o'clock. I straightway repeated how grateful I was to her, and asked for her friendship. I also confessed that I had been angry with her because I thought she hated me and had turned the King's favour away from me, as I had been told so by the Dauphiness, but that I was willing to forget everything if only she would be my friend henceforward. Thereupon she said all sorts of kind things to me, promised me her friendship, and we embraced.

" But it is not sufficient," I said, " to tell me that the King is displeased with me ; you must tell me how to regain his favour." She advised me to speak frankly to the King . . . and to confess that I had hated her because I thought that she had done me ill-service with the King, I followed her advice, and since Monsieur had told me that the King was also displeased

because I wrote too frankly in my letters, I mentioned the subject. "Your Majesty," I said, "must not be surprised at it, because my aunt is the person to whom I am most attached in the world, both from inclination and gratitude." I told him, "I have always told her everything that was in my heart, and whenever your Majesty has been kind to me I have told my aunt of your goodness, but when you ill-treated me I lamented it to her, and I have never been able to write otherwise than freely to her." The King replied, "I know nothing about your letters and have never read any of them. All this must have been Monsieur's imagination. I don't object to your loving and respecting your aunt as a mother, but she detests me." "My aunt," I told him, "has always admired your noble qualities, and when your Majesty pleases, she will like you also."

When I put everything before the King and had showed him clearly that however badly he treated me I had nevertheless always liked and respected him, and that, moreover, it had always been a great joy to me only to be allowed to be in his presence, he embraced me and begged me to forget the past, and promised me his goodwill. He laughed, too, when I said to him quite simply, "If I had not been fond of you I should not have hated Madame de Maintenon so much when I thought that she was depriving me of your favour."

Everything, in fact, went off well. I said to his Majesty that, since it was my only solace in my trouble, I couldn't help writing everything this very day to you, and his Majesty gave his permission. I shall have a distressing day again to-day, because the King is coming at three o'clock to open Monsieur's will, and as you can imagine that will give me great pain. I have suffered so greatly that I believe Monsieur's death would have led to my own if the fever had not evaporated all my humours.

Madame burns Monsieur's letters unopened.

30*th June*, 1701, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

If people in the other world know what is happening in this one I expect Monsieur will be very well pleased with me, because I found in his coffers all the letters that his young men had written to him, and I burnt them all without reading them, in case they fell into other hands.

Madame expresses her friendship for Madame de Maintenon.

1*st July*, 1701.

To MADAME DE MAINTENON.

If I had not had fever and the vapours badly, caused by the sad task I was engaged upon the day before yesterday of opening Monsieur's strong boxes, which were all scented with violet perfumes, you would have heard from me sooner. I cannot refrain from telling you how touched I am by the favours which the King conferred upon my son yesterday, and the way he has treated both him and me. Since this is the result of your good advice, Madame, I hope that you will permit me to express my gratitude, and assure you that I hold precious the friendship I promised you, and I beg you to continue to help me with your advice and counsel, and rest assured of my gratitude, which will last as long as I live.

Living on the charity of others.

14*th July*, 1701, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

It is difficult not to have sad thoughts when one has to live on the charity of others, and has nothing of one's own with which to procure a little pleasure. . . . I receive great comfort from the King, otherwise I could not endure my position. When the King speaks about Monsieur he is quite moved.

The affairs of Madame.

15*th July*, 1701, Versailles.

To the RAUGRAVINE AMELIA-ELISABETH.

I never had any intention of retiring into a convent. The monastic life does not appeal to me at all. . . . I am very much surprised that Monsieur Obrecht should be so ignorant of my affairs that he believes that I had a rich dowry. Perhaps he doesn't know how much my house costs, or more likely he believes what the *Gazette de Holland* says. It has already told many lies on this subject. So far I have nothing but praise for the King. because of the favours he bestows upon my son and myself,

His Majesty has made my son a rich and powerful nobleman. I am very pleased with him, and he is very considerate to me. He is a good fellow and very kind-hearted.

The young Duchesse de Bourgogne is ill.

14th August, 1701, Marly.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

Yesterday the Duchesse de Bourgogne almost died. We quite expected her death, but, thank Heaven, she is out of danger. Since Sunday she had had a continuous high fever, with paroxysms. On Tuesday she was bled for the first time in her life. Immediately she fell into a state of lethargy, and when they tried to waken her she struck out at everyone and recognised none of them. . . . Her husband, the Duc de Bourgogne, was in despair at seeing her so ill. He made me feel sorry for him, and I wept heartily with him.

King James II in a pitiful state.

8th September, 1701, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

I found King James in a pitiful state. His voice, I admit, is still as strong as usual and he knows people. . . . But he looks very ill and has a beard like a Capuchin. Last Sunday, after he had received the Sacraments, he sent for his children and household, blessed the former, and preached a long sermon to the Prince of Wales and the servants.

The Prince of Wales and his religion.

28th September, 1701, Fontainebleau.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

You have guessed quite correctly the purport of the lecture King James gave his son. He charged him to die rather than change his religion, with which sentiment I expect your son will be in hearty accord.

Madame's marriage contract.

5th October, 1701, Fontainebleau.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

My marriage contract should have been drawn up differently. They should have made it in the usual way, and not have added precisely those clauses that would be unfair to me all my life long. But papa never expected anything like that. He had no idea of the treachery of the French. However, they did know enough about Monsieur's tendencies, and it is hard to see how he should bother about his wife's future. But all that is past and done with, and it is no use talking about it any more.

Sorcery in Paris.

8th October, 1701, Fontainebleau.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

You wouldn't believe how silly everyone has become at Paris. They are trying to become master-sorcerers by evoking spirits and devilry of all sorts, and are only succeeding in being silly. You are right in saying that it is luxury and the love of money that lead people into all this sort of folly.

King Louis XIV's promise to King James II.

12th October, 1701, Fontainebleau.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

When I heard what our King had done for the Prince of Wales,[1] I felt sure that it would do the young man more harm than good, and that King William would turn it to his own advantage.

King William III and his favourites.

12th October, 1701, Fontainebleau.

To the RAUGRAVINE AMELIA-ELISABETH.

Speaking of bugs, they nearly devoured the young Queen of Spain[2] in the Spanish galleys, and they had to sit up with her

[1] Louis promised King James on his deathbed that he would acknowledge his son as King of England.

[2] Marie-Louise-Gabrielle de Savoie, younger sister of the Duchesse de Bourgogne, and daughter of Madame's step-daughter, Anne-Marie, and Victor-Amadée II, Duc de Savoie.

through several nights. She arrived a few days ago at Toulon, and from there will go to Barcelona by land. She says in her letter that she could not stand the sea any longer. . . .

King William often changes his favourites, and they say he has another in place of Albemarle. It is not surprising that the Queen had no rivals during her lifetime. People who have those tastes do not bother much about women. I have become so knowing about it since I came to France that I could write books on the subject

The death of King James II.

3rd November, 1701, Fontainebleau.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

I am sure that King James is in Heaven now. The Parisians go farther and imagine that he can work miracles, but my faith does not go as far as that. . . . You speak as though I did not know Wolmershausen. I have often seen him, but hardly ever fasting, which shows you that I know him.

The health of King William III.

4th November, 1701, Fontainebleau.

To the RAUGRAVINE AMELIA-ELISABETH.

Do you imagine, dear Amelise, that I never read the Bible because I live in this country? I read three chapters every morning. You mustn't think that the French Catholics are as bigoted as those in Germany. On the contrary, one would hardly believe it was the same religion. Whoever wishes may read the Holy Scriptures, and one is not obliged to believe in nonsense and stupid miracles. We don't believe in the infallibility of the Pope here, and when he excommunicated Monsieur de Lavardin at Rome we only laughed at it. The Pope is not adored here, and no value is set on pilgrimages and such things, wherein we differ completely from the German Catholics, and even from those of Spain and Italy. . . .

They say here that King William is dropsical and is dying, but I shall only believe it when the news is confirmed from some

other quarter. It would be a pity if such an intelligent King were to live so short a time. The young Englishmen who came here with the Ambassador, Lord Portland, when they saw that things at Paris were much the same as at their own Court, began to discuss all that quite naturally. The King is said to have been in love with Albemarle as with a woman, and they say he used to kiss his hands before all the Court. . . .

Women and tobacco.

5th November, 1701, Fontainebleau.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

I can't stand women taking tobacco, but nothing is more usual these days Madame d'Orleans and Madame la Duchesse take a disgusting amount. . . . As for ratafia, people take it because they eat a great deal of fish, which is bad for the stomach.

The spitefulness of the women of the Spanish Court.

17th November, 1701, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

On Saturday evening there arrived Monsieur de Louville, one of the King of Spain's gentlemen, who used to be La Manche's gentleman when he was here. They had not warned the poor little Queen that they were going to send all her people back, and when she got up in the morning she found their places taken by ugly and wicked-looking old women. Then she began to scream and wanted to come back with her people. The King already loves her with all his heart, and thought that such a thing might be possible. He is still only a child, and he began to weep because he thought his wife was going to leave him. But they consoled him, and told him that she wouldn't be allowed to, because the marriage had been consummated.

The ladies of the Court who are in attendance on her are spiteful creatures. The Queen asked to have her meals prepared in French fashion because she could not eat the Spanish cookery. So the King had dishes prepared for the Queen by French cooks. When they saw this, these women had some Spanish food prepared and only offered her their dishes, and left the French dishes on

one side. The King was angry, and forbade the Spanish cooks to prepare any more meals, and had everything done entirely in the French fashion. The women then took their soup and slopped it about, saying that they would spoil their dresses. . . . They did the same with the stews. They wouldn't carry the large dishes of roasted meat because they said their hands weren't strong enough, but from amongst the other roasts they picked up three chickens with their hands, put them on a plate, and brought them like that to the Queen. You couldn't find more spiteful women, and they are hideous-looking as well.

New comedies and operas.

8th December, 1701, Versailles.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

Every day people say to me, to-day there is going to be a new opera, or, to-morrow a new play will be produced. This very year there have been—and it has never happened thus before—six new comedies and three new operas. I think the Devil has done it on purpose to tease me in my solitude.

King William is well again.

11th December, 1701, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

Here they consider that black jet makes diamonds more sparkling and enhances the whiteness of pearls and necks. . . . I believe that King William lives by affairs of state as others do by eating and drinking, and that it is this occupation with statecraft which has given his Majesty back his health.

Gossip about King William.

13th December, 1701, Versailles.

To the RAUGRAVINE AMELIA-ELISABETH.

What they say about King William is quite true, but all our heroes have been the same. Hercules, Theseus, Alexander, and Cæsar, they were all like that, and had their favourites.

. . . They conceal it as much as possible, so as not to offend the common people, but amongst people of quality it is discussed quite openly. They think it is a polite accomplishment, and say without any shame that God has not punished anyone for this behaviour since Sodom and Gomorrah. . . .

King Louis is praised in every book.

15th December, 1701, Marly.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

One day I asked someone whom I know to be sensible, why the King was always praised in every book. He replied that printers had been expressly forbidden to print any book which did not contain some praise of the King, because the French as a whole read a great deal, and in the provinces they read everything that comes from Paris. These praises therefore inspire them with a proper reverence and respect for the King, That is why it is done and not to curry favour with the King, because he never sees them or even hears of them.

A strange story of a mother and her son.

23rd December, 1701, Versailles.

To the RAUGRAVINE AMELIA-ELISABETH.

You are confusing the Marquise de Richelieu with the Duchesse. The latter has been dead a long time. The Marquise is horribly debauched in more ways than one. One day she placed herself in the Dauphin's bed without being asked, in order to lie with him. When he came into his room, the servants said, " Monseigneur, there is a lady in your bed waiting for you, but she would not give her name." He went up to the bed, and when he saw that it was the Marquise de Richelieu he lay with her, but next day he told the story to everyone. . . . . .

We hear funny stories of things that have happened at Paris. The daughter of a rich shopkeeper, aged fourteen years, was deceived by a young fellow and found herself with child. She was cunning enough to conceal the state of affairs, and gave birth in secret to a son. She took it straightaway to an orphanage, pretending that it was not hers, but first she put a mark on him so that she would know him later on. For several

years she took great care of him and gave him all he needed. Then a rich Parisian merchant fell in love with her and married her. So cunning was she, as I have already told you, that she thought that if she went to the orphanage, and especially if she took them money, her husband would suspect something, so she determined never to go again. Thus she lived for twenty years with her husband until he died and left her all his possessions. She had a great fancy for the head assistant in her husband's shop, who also loved her, so she married him that summer. As he lay beside her she suddenly espied on his body the mark she had made on her son. This frightened her, but she said nothing about it, and hurried off to the orphanage, where she asked what had become of the boy she had placed there. They told her that when he grew up he showed a liking for shopkeeping, and had served his apprenticeship and entered a rich merchant's business. They gave her former husband's name. Then she could doubt no longer that her second husband was her son. She hastened to her confessor and confessed everything. He told her to keep the affair secret, but not to sleep with her husband any more until the question had been referred to the Sorbonne. It is not yet known for certain what they have decided.

Beauty does not last for ever.

29th December, 1701, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

I am sure that you have not as many wrinkles as I have. . . . but they don't worry me in the least. Since I have never been beautiful, I have not lost much. Moreover, I see round me women whom I used to know as beauties, and they are now uglier than I am. No one living would recognise Madame de la Vallière now, and Madame de Montespan has a skin like a piece of paper that children have played with, folding and unfolding it. Her whole face is covered with tiny lines very close together. Her beautiful hair is white as the snow and her complexion is red.

The finances of Madame.

1*st January*, 1702, Versailles.

To the Duchess of Hanover.

As soon as I had returned to my own room after dinner, the King sent me two thousand pistols, so that this year I am richer by a thousand pistols than I was last year.

The King of Spain and the Inquisition.

12*th January*, 1702, Versailles.

To the Duchess of Hanover.

I do not think that the King of Spain could do away with the Inquisition. The monks, and particularly the Dominicans, are too dangerous. He would not be sure of his life if he attacked them. . .

The death of an old friend.

12*th March*, 1702.

To Monsieur de Harling.

I have received the sad news of the loss of Madame de Harling. Although the poor lady had fallen into such a state of disease that God was merciful to her in delivering her from pain, I wept for her with all my heart. Your nephew did so, too, and I beg you to believe that no one shares your grief more sincerely than I do, because I can never forget the care she took of me in my childhood and the trouble and sorrow I must have caused her, and I shall always be very grateful to her. I do not deserve any thanks for having helped your nephew to obtain a regiment, because I have only managed tardily what I promised Madame de Harling long ago, and your nephew is worth helping. He is a very reliable boy, who has made himself much respected and never disgraces his family. I hope that he will make his way in the world, and I shall try to help him in anything I can.

Ballads about the Maréchal de Villeroy.

16*th March*, 1702, Marly.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

The Maréchal de Villeroy doesn't understand raillery unless it is himself who rails. He is proud by nature, and he must find it very mortifying to be a prisoner. The ballads they have made about him are sung to very old airs, which date from the time of the barricading of Paris.

The apartments of a head lackey.

23*rd March*, 1702, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

Yesterday I thought I should like to see the suite of Monsieur Moreau, the head lackey to the Duc de Bourgogne. He has arranged it himself, and I have often heard about it. . . . It is small, but neat and interesting. There are four little rooms with magnificent portraits and pictures by Poussin. The King himself hasn't better ones. There are three of these. Two deal with the death of Phocion. In one he is dying, and in the other they are gathering up his ashes. Then there is one of Moses being saved from the water by Pharaoh's daughter. There is a Canache, a Mignard, a Van Dyck, a Basan, and pictures by other great painters whose names I have forgotten. They all have ornamental gilt frames. Surrounding the large pictures are small ones representing all the Kings of France from François I to our present King. Around each King are to be seen all the great men, scholars and soldiers, who lived in his time.

Moreau has portraits of all the poets from that time up to our days, and Malherbe has a dreadful beard. He has also all the Kings' mistresses and all the Queens. In a separate cabinet are Madame de Montespan, Madame la Vallière, Madame de Fontanges, Madame de Ludre. He has Madame de Maintenon, too, dressed as a saint, as well as all the Royal Family, and all those who have won great battles arranged chronologically. Amongst them I noticed the Prince, the Duc d'Harcourt, Monsieur de Turrenne, and Monsieur de Luxembourg. Moreau has hung under Cardinal Richelieu all those whose deaths he caused, including Monsieur de Montmorency, the Maréchal d'Ancre,

Monsieur de Cinq Mars, the Maréchal de Marillac and Monsieur de Bassompiene.

Under the portrait of Henry III are all the *guisards* and all those who played a part in the drama of the League. But it would take too long to tell you all I saw. Moreau has also some beautiful and very valuable porcelains and bronze figures. The portraits of Monsieur le Brun, Mignard, and Monsieur le Nostre are very good likenesses, and there are also good ones of Racine, Corneille, and La Fontaine. Then there are the Jansenists and Madame Guyon. I advised him to place the latter lady between Monsieur de Cambrai and Monsieur de Meaux. He said he had thought of that, but did not dare do so. Another portrait is of Rabelais, who has a very funny face. It is all very interesting to see, and I stayed a whole hour looking at everything. How changed are the times. Except for Madame de Maintenon, who is dressed as Sainte-Françoise, all the others are in their every-day garb, and their dresses are not in the least like ours. The worthy Chivry is peculiarly accoutred ; he has a grey linen doublet, slashed and lined with blue ; but, there, I am afraid I am boring you with all these details.

The death of King William III.

26th March, 1702, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

As I arrived here, one of my son's servants came to tell me that a banker of Paris, called Samuel Bernard, has had a letter from England telling him that King William died a week ago at three o'clock in the afternoon. So you are one step nearer to the Throne.

The character of George I.

22nd April, 1702, Versailles.

To the RAUGRAVINE AMELIA-ELISABETH.

When he was visiting here, I could see that the Elector [1] was a cold and obstinate man. However much kindness I showed him, he would not unbend to me and talk freely to me. I had

[1] Afterwards George I of England.

to drag every word he spoke out of him, which is not an agreeable task. But where I think he makes his greatest mistake is in treating his mother as he does. . . . Defiance, avarice, and pride have made him the sort of man he is. . . . I can often tell from my aunt's letters that she is unhappy about it, although she never says so to me. The worst of it is that he is not kind-hearted by nature.

Our Queen of England has shown herself generous and a true Christian. Many of the English, on hearing of King William's death, wished to light bonfires, but the Queen had them put out, and forbade anyone to show their joy at the King's death. She herself speaks of him without any ill-feeling. I admire her very much for it.

Madame sits in her cabinet.

22nd April, 1702, Versailles.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

King William's death distressed me greatly. Last Autumn Lenor sent me a *Calendrier d'Ausbourg* for this present year. The King's death is clearly foretold for March 20th, 1702. . . . Next Monday the Duc de Bourgogne leaves for the army. On all sides one sees nothing but people saying good-bye, and the Court will soon be deserted. But that doesn't worry me much, because I shall not miss the society. I am alone all day in my cabinet and time does not hang heavily; in fact, I find the days too short. I have plenty of flowers outside my window, many little dogs which I love dearly, my medals, and lots of books. One of my prettiest little bitches is at present having her puppies here in my cabinet.

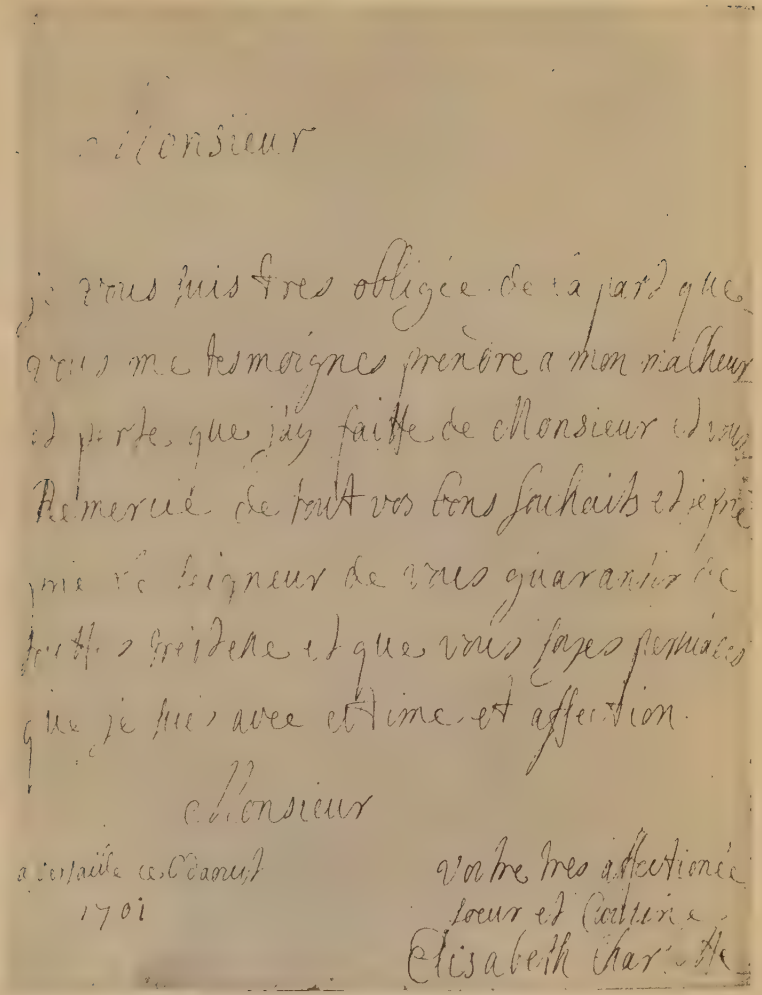
The flirtations of an Electress.

29th April, 1702, Marly.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

The marriage of my cousin, the Elector of Brunswick, has resulted in more misery than happiness.[1] From every point of

[1] George, Elector of Hanover, married Sophia-Dorothea, daughter of the Duke of Brunswick. The Count of Konigsmarck was suspected of being her lover and was killed by her father, and she was shut up for the rest of her life in a castle.



Letter from Madame to George, Prince of Denmark, Consort of Queen Anne, replying to his condolences on the death of Monsieur.
(*Department of Manuscripts, British Museum.*)

view, eternal shame has come of it. The Duchess has more cause than anyone to be distressed at her daughter's trouble, because if she had not brought her up to love flirtations and gallantry from her earliest days, she would not have come to such a state of misery as she is in at the present hour. There are people here who maintain that she was not guilty, but a young woman like her who allows herself to be kissed and caressed goes the rest of the way, too. The Duchess is of quite low extraction,[1] and it would have been an honour for her to have married Monsieur's head footman. So just consider how suitable she was for a Duc de Brunswick!

The conscience of Queen Anne.

29th April, 1702, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

It doesn't surprise me in the least to hear that King William died so calmly. People usually do die as they have lived. Mademoiselle de Malauze said in a letter to me that Lord Albemarle almost followed his master to the grave, so overwhelmed with grief was he. That he almost died touches me greatly, because it has not been given to me to see such a great friendship since my husband's death. . . . I hear that Princess Anne has consoled herself very easily for the death of her brother-in-law and cousin. I don't think the new Queen can have a conscience, after having persecuted her father up to the day of his death. I hope she will not play you false.

Bribery at Rome; and the death of Madame's favourite dog.

12th May, 1702, Versailles.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

The Commissioners in whose hands my case was at Rome received fifty thousand crowns. The Abbé de Teseu has seen the original receipts. When he told the Pope about it, he replied, "Pity me for having to deal with such people, impious, false and wicked, who pervert justice for money." But he said nothing about indemnifying me for the wrong they had done.

[1] The Duchess of Brunswick was a Frenchwoman called Eléanore d'Olbreuse.

. . . The Prince de Conti is not the only person who has designs upon the Principality of Orange. There are also the Duc de Villeroy, Monsieur de Matignon, and the Duc de Lesdiguières.

P.S. I don't know whether you are fond of dogs, and whether you will understand the true sorrow I feel to-day as I write. My little dog Mione, who was my favourite, has died.

The insincere flatteries of the French people.

17*th June*, 1702, Versailles.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

Those French people sang my praises solely out of politeness while they were in your house, and in order to please you, because you are fond of me; but I can hardly flatter myself that I possess the affection of the people of this country.

The carp at Marly.

6*th July*, 1702, Marly.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

This morning I went for a walk with the King. You would think that the fairies had been at work here, because where I left a large pond I found a wood or grove, and where I left an open square and swings I found a lake brimming with water, into which will be thrown to-night a hundred and more fish of different sorts and thirty very handsome big carp, some of which shine like gold and others like silver. Others are a beautiful deep blue, or spotted with yellow, black and white, blue and white, golden brown and white, white and yellow with red or black spots. In short, it is wonderful how many different sorts there are.

The repentance of a scholar.

14*th July*, 1702, Marly.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

The kink that poor Charles-Maurice had has, alas, cost him his life. I am sure that he must have burnt up his liver by

drinking too much wine. But everyone has his destiny, and what is fated will come to pass in spite of everything. Doubtless he repented having been the slave of this passion, so there is ground for hoping that eternal happiness is now his, although scholars like him rarely have a very sound faith.

The defeat of Visconti.

9th August, 1702, Marly.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

. . . I had to break the good news to my son that Monsieur de Vendôme has defeated three thousand of General Annibal Visconti's troops. They call him *Animal Visconti* here, because he let himself be thus crushed. . . .

There are deserters from every army. In Italy, Danish soldiers have come over to us by fifties and hundreds. Melac has not been wounded at all. He is a bold and successful soldier, but is terribly cruel. . . . It really depends very little upon ourselves whether we are sad or gay. Take, for example, Lenor. She has a cheerful disposition, and sorrow never attacks her, the rogue! Moreover, when she is in the country she can amuse herself with her friends whenever she likes, and although she endures boredom here for love of me, she can make up for it during the winter at her own home. Here she is sitting beside me winding silk and laughing at everything I write. . . .

Yesterday we went with the King into the garden before and after dinner, in order to watch them putting some beautiful statues in their places. There were a pair of them, and they cost one hundred thousand francs. One is Fame. She is seated on a winged courser. The whole thing is in one solid block of white marble. The other is Hercules, and he is also on horseback. It is quite charming. I am sure there isn't a more lovely garden than this in the whole world. . . . When we are at Versailles, which is considered the royal residence, everyone who comes into the King's presence or into ours must be in full dress, but at Marly, Meudon and Saint-Cloud mantles are worn, and it is the same when we travel. I find full dress much more convenient than mantles, which I cannot endure. . . . I dislike head-dresses, too, because they catch in everything. . . .

Odd items of news.

6th September, 1702.

To Monsieur Etienne Polier de Bottens.

It seems to me that as long as one is in this world one must like to know what is going on, so I always make a point of telling you any news I come across. There are two items of news to-day. First, Madame de Maintenon's fever and cough have come back, and second, the Prince d'Harcourt has returned to Versailles and requested the honour of an audience with the King, but the King would not see him.

The precedence of a Count Palatine.

12*th October*, 1702, Fontainebleau.

To the Raugravine Amelia-Elisabeth.

Although we Princesses Palatine have, so to speak, descended from the most powerful princes in the world, they are unwilling here to admit that we come from good houses, and if a Count Palatine comes visiting, the first old down-at-heel duke who comes along will dispute precedence with him. I have often been driven nearly out of my senses by it. . . . I have only nine dogs in my room. Pugs are usually very faithful, but I prefer spaniels. All my dogs are spaniels, and they all come from the same stock.

The naval disaster at Vigo.

9*th November*, 1702, Marly.

To the Duchess of Hanover.

We all have long faces here except the King, who appears quite serene. You probably know that the English and Dutch fleets have burnt all the King's ships at Vigo in Galicia. This is a most unlucky year. If we have a success it is immediately followed by a disaster.

Gossip and state secrets.

31*st December*, 1702, Versailles.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

For three weeks now I have had no letters from you or Amelisa. This makes me suspect that you are not being allowed to write to me. . . . It is stupid of them not to allow us to write to each other. We know no state secrets, and do not meddle with public affairs. What harm can it do the Emperor if we tell each other that there has been a marriage or a baptism, or that we send our love to each other, or such and such a play was well acted, and so on ?

CHAPTER XII.

1703—1704.

Madame's opinion on the determination of sex.

17th January, 1703, Versailles.

To MONSIEUR ETIENNE POLIER DE BOTTENS.

I congratulate you on having got one of the nieces you are so fond of well married. Your kindly nature leaves its mark everywhere. In order to tell you what I think of the advice you gave your niece, I should have to know her temperament. If she resembles me, the advice would be excellent because I don't enjoy having babies, but if she has a violent passion for her husband and does not want him to bed elsewhere than with her, then your advice will be neither well received nor followed. I don't think it needs more strength to have a son than a daughter, and I am quite sure that no one knows what makes it a boy or a girl. The Almighty alone decides that.

Doctors often work in the dark.

5th February, 1703, Versailles.

To MONSIEUR ETIENNE POLIER DE BOTTENS.

Whether the doctors were better in the days of Seneca than they are now I know not, but at present I am quite sure that they often work in the dark. Tobacco is one of our greatest remedies, so I am sending you an assortment of pipes of the latest fashion, because little presents foster friendship. Let me know if it is as agreeable as they pretend.

Advice about a young lady.

4th March, 1703, Versailles.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

Spanheim's daughter is a very pretty and well-made girl, but take my advice and don't allow your niece to become too intimate with her, because this young lady has learnt things here about which it is not at all necessary for your niece to know. . . . As for your nephew, she is good company and he can be friendly with her.

The birth of Madame's grandson.

6th August, 1703.

To MONSIEUR ETIENNE POLIER DE BOTTENS.

I would have announced the birth of the Duc de Chartres[1] to you myself yesterday, but I was sure you would hear of it at Paris and I was so tired out by eleven long letters that I had to write that I found it impossible to write another to you. I never doubted your joy for one moment, because our friendship is not of yesterday. It has already lasted for forty-six long years, and will, I hope, endure as long as we live.

The nobility of the French as compared with the Germans.

18th August, 1703, Versailles.

To the RAUGRAVINE AMELIA-ELISABETH.

How does it happen that you have a French girl in your household ? They are usually of the very lowest nobility, and cannot be compared in any way with our German noble classes, because when a plebeian buys an office as secretary from the King he thereby becomes a gentleman. Moreover, nothing is thought of marrying beneath one's station any more. The men marry all sorts of shopkeepers' daughters, or even peasant girls, provided that they have money.

[1] The only son of Madame's son, the future Regent.

The Battle of Landau.

18th December, 1703, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

It is true that Précontal was killed at the very beginning of the battle. At first the French were losing, then they began to win. The Germans drove them back a second time, but in the end the French won. That is the account Monsieur Sekelson gave me of the battle. The Germans must have traitors and spies in their ranks. It is evident also from the memorandum they found in Précontal's pocket.

The affections of Madame de Mazarin.

23rd December, 1703, Versailles.

To the RAUGRAVINE AMELIA-ELISABETH.

I have never seen Saint-Evremond, but I have seen a portrait of him. . . . At his age I should think that Madame de Mazarin could let him put his head on her breast without causing a scandal! If he had been the only one, people would not have so much bad to say about her.

Madame insists on her prerogatives.

4th January, 1704, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

I must really tell you how just the King is. The Duchesse de Bourgogne's ladies, who are called Ladies of the Palace, tried to arrogate the rank and take the place of my ladies everywhere. Such a thing was never done either in the time of the Queen or of the Dauphiness. They got the King's Guards to keep their places and push back the chairs belonging to my ladies. I complained first of all to the Duc de Noailles, who replied that it was the King's order. Then I went immediately to the King and said to him, " May I ask your Majesty if it is by your orders that my ladies have now no place or rank as they used to have? If it is your desire, I have nothing more to say, because I only wish to obey you, but your Majesty knows that formerly when the Queen and the Dauphiness were alive the

Ladies of the Palace had no rank, and my Maids of Honour, Gentlemen of Honour, and Ladies of the Robe had their places like those of the Queen and the Dauphiness. I do not know why the Ladies of the Palace should pretend to anything else." The King became quite red, and replied, " I have given no such order, who said that I had ? " " The Maréchal de Noailles," I replied. The King asked him why he had said such a thing, and he denied it entirely. " I am willing to believe, since you say so," I replied, " that my lackey misunderstood you, but as the King has given no such orders, see that your Guards don't keep places for those ladies and hinder my servants from carrying chairs for my service," as we say here. Although these ladies are high in favour, the King, nevertheless, sent the majordomo to find out how things should be done. I told him, and it will not happen again. These women are becoming far too insolent now that they are in favour, and they imagined that I would not have the courage to report the matter to the King. But I shall not lose my rank nor prerogatives on account of the favour they enjoy. The King is too just for that.

The frail ladies of the Court.

17th September, 1704, Versailles.

To the RAUGRAVINE AMELIA-ELISABETH.

There are very few women to be found here who are not frail by nature. They nurse the hope that since Our Lord had pity on the weakness of many women of their sort like Mary Magdalene and the woman of Samaria who had committed adultery, He will deal leniently with them. You might think that one would tire very quickly of gallantry, but I have heard many people say that women who have once practised it are bored with any other diversion and never get tired of it. . . . Will the Prince Elector[1] allow his brother-in-law to see his sister during her lying-in ? I shouldn't take my oath on it, because he is so peculiar. Does he think someone will gobble up his princeling if he allows people to look at him ? There is something cracked in his brain.

[1] George of Hanover, afterwards George II of England.

The reconciliation with Madame de Maintenon does not endure.

29th February, 1704.

To Monsieur Etienne Polier de Bottens.

I do not know how I shall begin the month of March, but I am finishing February as dismally as the weather is. I have been warned that Torcy has again played me one of his tricks, and has accused me on all sorts of false charges. All this is inspired by the All-Powerful Dame, who gives rein to her implacable hatred of me, as I always foresaw that she would. She also makes the King, as well as the Duchesse de Bourgogne, hate me. The Duchesse was bled this morning. I went to visit her, thinking that it was my duty to do so, but they requested me to leave her room, as my presence was annoying her. Such is the fruit of that fine reconciliation.[1] . . . I was never taken in by that affair, as you know, and I have always said that that woman would hate me until her dying day.

Conversation out of fashion.

9th March, 1704.

To Monsieur Etienne Polier de Bottens.

No one talks much at Court nowadays, and argument has absolutely died out. Most people gamble all the time, and there is nothing that could be called conversation. It is quite out of fashion. People like me and a few others who do not gamble are held in the utmost scorn. . . . As far as I am concerned, I live a life of great retirement. The Court is not what it used to be, and the only people who gather together are those who are plotting something. Everyone else lives furtively, and there is no gaiety anywhere. Such is the environment I live in. . . .

I cannot see that your memory is failing like that of the Cardinal d'Estrées, although he is many years younger than you are. Perhaps you know that the Fathers of the Oratory and the Jesuits hate each other bitterly. The preacher this Easter was Massillon, a Father of the Oratory, and the Duc de Bourgogne's confessor is a Jesuit, who does not resemble Father Massillon in the least. Cardinal d'Estrées, seeing the confessor

[1] The reconciliation which took place between Madame and Madame de Maintenon after the death of Monsieur.

pass, stopped him, and, taking him for the preacher, kept him a whole hour praising his sermon. The poor Jesuit tried to explain that he had never preached, and that sermons were not his strong point, but the Cardinal continued to shower praises on him and his wonderful sermons.

Madame does not like fish.

30th March, 1704, Versailles.

To the RAUGRAVINE AMELIA-ELISABETH.

I have not undertaken the good work of fasting, because I cannot eat fish, and I am sure there are better things to do than to spoil one's stomach by eating too much of that stuff.

The booty of corsairs.

15th April, 1704, Marly.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

The worthy Madame Bellemont doesn't know much about the fate of goods captured by corsairs if she thinks that I can recover anything for her. The King leaves the corsairs all their captures, and only the admiral has any claim to a share. No one else receives anything. . . . The King has given the Comtesse de Furstemberg a pension. But most people think that she had not much need of it, because according to rumour she has stripped the Cardinal[1] in proper fashion. The day he died they wanted to give him another *portion cordiale*, but in the whole house they couldn't find a silver spoon or saucer. Everything had been taken away.

The dulness of religious services.

22nd May, 1704, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

In the midst of this hot weather we have the Fête-Dieu. This morning we followed the procession through the principal streets. It is still passing. The services before the altars are unbearable; they are deadly dull. One has to kneel and listen to a long musical service, which is not amusing when one

[1] The Cardinal de Furstemberg. The Comtesse was his nephew's wife, but lived in his house and is said to have been his mistress.

is in that position. Then we return to the Church and listen to a long High Mass for two hours. If all that doesn't please God better than it pleases me, I think the priests are much to be pitied. . . .

While passing along le Cours [1] I met the Duc de Mantoue. I had never seen him before. He is not handsome, and resembles the Duc de Vendôme in age and ugliness. He is greatly taken up with singers and dancers from the opera.

The cunning Queen of Poland.

18th June, 1704.

To MONSIEUR ETIENNE POLIER DE BOTTENS.

I agree with you. Heartfelt sorrow does not show itself in such torrents of eloquence as there were in the Queen of Poland's[2] letter. I have always heard that she is a woman brimful of cunning. The Electress says very wittily in the letter which I had from her yesterday that Alexander and Cæsar did not play such rough games as the King of Sweden.

Madame's son writes an opera.

10th August, 1704, Marly.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

Yesterday I paid a visit to my son and his wife at Saint-Cloud. They were going to take part in the production of an opera that my son wrote himself, but it did not begin until nine o'clock, so I could not be there, because I never see the King except at table, and I could not bring myself to give up the opportunity of seeing him at supper.

The contemplation of King Louis XIV's successor.

24th August, 1704, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

When one knows the people who would take the King's place in the event of His Majesty's death, one can imagine what a

[1] Le Cours de la Reine.

[2] Maria-Casimira-Louise, widow of Jean Sobieski, was a Princess of the House of Bethune.

terrible loss it would be if this dreadful disaster came to pass.[1] Heaven preserve me from it! I shudder to think of it. I cannot flatter myself that the King has any affection for me, but he pays me the compliment of bearing with me and speaking politely to me. What more can I ask for? It is a great thing here for anyone to be left in peace. It is a real favour, so I receive many favours from his Majesty, and am very grateful to him.

The tepid meditation of Madame.

14th August, 1704, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

We have just come from vespers. It was terribly hot there, but since my meditation was, alas, even more tepid than the temperature, I nearly went to sleep. . . . Greater joy has never been shown than at the birth of the Duc de Bretagne,[2] and the rejoicing continues still although the child is more than seven weeks old. . . . There is a rumour in Paris that an armistice or peace is under consideration.

Rumours of the Battle of Blenheim.

21st August, 1704, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

They have just brought us tidings so strange and disastrous that I am afraid my servants have misunderstood them. They say that the enemy have captured twenty-six battalions from Maréchal Tallard,[3] and they are not sure that he himself is not taken prisoner. Blanzac and La Vallière must be amongst the prisoners, who are being very badly treated. If this news is true, such conduct is unjust, because we treat prisoners of quality very well here. . . . There is a rumour also that the Elector of Bavaria has defeated ten thousand men, but it is not

[1] The Dauphin was completely dominated by the Prince and Princess de Conti and their followers at Meudon. They included Madame's worst enemies.

[2] Eldest child of the Duc and Duchesse de Bourgogne. He only lived nine months.

[3] The Battle of Blenheim (or Hochstadt), 13th August, 1704.

known where or when. Time will tell us. We could say, like Mademoiselle Rolt used to, "Nowhere do more surprising things happen than in the world." If Tallard is the cause of twenty-six battalions being captured he will be lampooned here like his cousin Villeroy was when he was taken prisoner at Cremone, and that will be more ballads for your collection. Villars has more courage than brain. . . . The person I am most sorry for is Monsieur de Marillac.[1] He has lost an only son, who would have grown up a splendid man. They think that the Princesse de Conti has also lost her young cousin, the Chevalier de la Vallière.

Illuminations at Meudon; more news of Blenheim.

28*th August*, 1704, Meudon.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

Let me thank you again very sincerely for the ointment for the eyes which you were good enough to send me. I gave the Countesse de Grammont great pleasure with it, but I expect I shall have need of it myself soon, because my eyesight is getting so dim that I can hardly read the *Dutch Gazettes*. I am greatly distressed at the thought, because I dislike spectacles very much and I cannot read with them. I am afraid, however, that I shall soon have to use them. My aunt the Abbesse de Maubuisson can still see very well. I dined with her the day before yesterday, and she is as bright and good-natured as ever and looks very well. The only things about her, which are not as good as they used to be, are her legs . . . her five senses are perfectly sound and she is as quick-witted as ever.

We have been here since yesterday evening. I went first to Saint-Cloud to see my grandchildren, and I thought my little grandson so beautiful that I begged my son to have his portrait painted. When I receive one I shall send you a copy. . . . After I had played with the children awhile I came on here, and saw the most beautiful sight one could wish to see. I refer to the illuminations. They took the form of a great arcade arched like a dome—a veritable triumphal arch as high as the castle. At both sides there were a dozen wide portals and

[1] De Marillac is notorious for his cruelty to the Protestants after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. He had two sons, one of whom became a monk.

between the portals devices painted on pyramids. Before the triumphal arch was a huge column-base surmounted by a figure of Fame. On the base, which seemed to be of marble, there were four inscriptions. In front of the column was a great basin of water and a theatre of turf. It was all hung with fairy lights, so close together that it gave one the impression of being one blaze of fire. The Palace of the Sun could not be more dazzling. The fireworks also were magnificent. I don't think those they are letting off to-night at Paris will be any better, but here it was all over too quickly.

We do not know yet exactly what has happened. It is well known that Tallard [1] has lost the battle, but how he did so is not known, and we do not know the exact extent of our losses. Zurlauben, who was reported dead, is only wounded; Clerembeau, who was rumoured the day before yesterday to be sound and well, was said yesterday to be drowned, so you see we know nothing for certain. The only thing we are sure of is the defeat of the Elector of Bavaria and the greater defeat of Tallard. It is partridges that hide their heads and present their behinds to the hunter, and you amused me very much by comparing the Elector of Bavaria with these birds.

Losses at Blenheim.

31*st August*, 1704, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

There are three or four ladies here for whom I am very sorry. They are Madame de Saint Valery, who has lost her only son; the poor Maréchal de Clerembeau, who has lost a son who might be described as an only son, since his brother is a priest. He tried to swim across the Danube with his horse, which foundered in mid-river. He did not know how to swim, and so was drowned. The poor Marquise de Bethune has lost her eldest son, who was my god-child, and my head lady of the bed-chamber has also lost her eldest son. One sees mourners everywhere. It is all lamentable, and war is a horrible thing. I must tell you a rather smart saying. The news of the defeat was received at the exact moment when the bonfires were being

[1] Tallard, the French commander, was taken prisoner; Zurlauben, the leader of the Bavarians, was killed; and Marshal Clerembeau was drowned in an attempt to swim the Danube and escape the slaughter at Hochstadt.

prepared in honour of the Duchesse de Bourgogne, an engraving of which I sent you. Since the weather looked like rain the men in charge of the fireworks began to cover them up. A passer-by seeing them spreading over their sheets cried, "What are you doing with them?" One of them immediately replied, "We are packing up our fireworks to send to the Emperor; we have no more need of them here. . . ." We do not think here that this affair will lead to an early peace. Our King has still a large army in Germany, and the Elector of Bavaria is brave and never spares himself when at war. . . . We do not seek in the least to disguise the result of the battle, but acknowledge quite openly that we have lost it, and that Tallard was beaten because the cavalry did not do its duty. The Prince d'Anhalt, who commanded the Brandenburgers, is the same who married the apothecary's daughter.

News of a naval victory.

7th September, 1704, Marly.

To the Duchess of Hanover.

Before going to table the King heard some good news. The fleets have fought near Malaga, and after ten hours' fighting our admiral dismasted eight of the enemy's ships.[1] The enemy's fleet has taken to flight with the admiral in pursuit, and as the wind, which was previously against us, has turned in our favour, we expect to hear still more good news of this naval engagement. This will be some compensation for the disappointment of the defeat at Hochstadt, but it will not console the poor souls who have lost people. . . . We are just as sad here as you are, and almost the whole Court is in mourning. Madame de Cornuel used to say that the *Te Deums* of princes usually meant the *De Profundis* for their subjects. . . .

The Elector of Bavaria is now at Strasbourg, from whence he intends to proceed to Flanders. He has sent his wife and children to Munich. They say that when a Prince Elector leaves his children in his principality he cannot be refused admittance, or have his electorate taken away from him, and that if your father, the King of Bohemia,[2] had done so, they

[1] The naval battle off Velez Malaga.

[2] Frederic V, Elector Palatine, lost his Electorate when he accepted the Crown of Bohemia.

would not have been able to take the higher Palatinate from him nor the chief Electorship.

Schomberg and Ruffigny.

21st September, 1704, Fontainebleau.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

Your brother-in-law[1] has the reputation of being somewhat quick-tempered and perverse, and that is the reason given for his having left Portugal again. It is very wrong of Ruffigny [2] to bear arms against his King, from whom he has received many favours, even though he has left here and taken up his abode in England. Although he has changed his name and calls himself Lord Galway, he is still the same Ruffigny upon whom the King used to heap his favours. He should, therefore, show more gratitude than he does.

Madame thinks English women the most beautiful.

27th September, 1704, Fontainebleau.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

It is a French custom to send away all the baggage before going into battle. Amelia saw nearly all the officer prisoners at Frankfort. Tallard would not see her. She says in her letter that he talks to himself, but he has done that all his life. For example, at the King's supper table he will get up and begin to talk to himself. The Duchesse de Bourgogne and I often used to laugh about it last year. No one could be more courageous than the Elector of Bavaria, but as Solomon says, there is a time for everything, so after all his fighting he sought

[1] The Duke of Schomberg.

[2] After the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes Louis showed his appreciation for two staunch Huguenots, Ruvigny and Schomberg, by offering to allow them to remain in Paris and retain their possessions. They refused, and went to live in England. Ruvigny took some of his possessions with him, and Louis allowed him the enjoyment of what he left in Paris during his lifetime, and to his surviving son afterwards. This son, who is the Ruvigny mentioned in Madame's letter, entered the service of William III, who made him Lord Galway. Although he was the only Huguenot allowed to retain his possessions in France, he hated France bitterly, and ended by displeasing Louis to such an extent that at last he confiscated his property.

a little diversion at Metz. Every day he gave a ball to the ladies and took them for outings. It would appear that he left Metz with regret, but I believe that Lunati, our Duc de Lorraine's favourite, was not at all sorry to see him depart for Brussels. Indeed, Lunati reached Metz at the same moment as the Elector arrived there. His wife and he were accompanying Prince Franz of Luxembourg. On his return journey he had to pass through Metz, where the Elector, finding Madame Lunati very agreeable, made a great fuss of the husband, in order to be able to visit the wife, and begged him to stay with him as long as he was in Metz, a request which Lunati dare not refuse. I leave you to imagine how pleased an Italian would be to find himself made much of for the sake of his wife ! The Elector also offered to take him back with him to Brussels, but Lunati refused point blank. English women have a superstition that it brings their children luck to be dedicated to the Mother of God. But how can they have such ugly little ones ? I think, in contrast, that English women are more beautiful than the women of other nations . . .

The Kings of Portugal and Spain, and St. Anthony.

The story goes that before the King of Portugal left Lisbon with the King of Spain, he went to a church dedicated to the Virgin and placed his naked sword at Our Lady's feet, beseeching her to bless it. There came a monk who pronounced Our Lady's benediction and placed the sword between her hands, from whence the King received it back with many deep reverences and genuflections. From there his Majesty betook himself to the Church of Saint Anthony of Padua. The saint was brought out with much ceremony and was carried to a litter. Then, lest the worthy Saint Anthony should find himself too dull, they proceeded to the church of a female saint whose name I have forgotten, and placed her on the seat opposite to him. This litter goes ahead of them everywhere, and the two Kings follow it. Such childishness !

Fountains, a kitchen-garden, and music at Versailles.

26th October, 1704, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

Last Thursday we left Fontainebleau at eleven o'clock . . . and we reached Sceaux at a quarter to five. I went for a walk until five o'clock, but the King continued walking until night fell. . . . Next day, Friday, I wrote to my daughter in the morning, and then wrote two or three other letters. The King went out in spite of the fog. At one o'clock we sat down to dinner, and by this time the fog had lifted and the weather was beautiful. It was a real May day. . . . I went to see the new fountains which the Duc du Maine has had erected. They are charming, and consist of two rockeries made of stones, shells, coral, mother-of-pearl, reeds and bulrushes. The reeds and rushes are tipped with gold. The water falls from a height like a natural waterfall, on to the rocks and shells with a pleasant murmur. The two fountains are opposite to each other in a boxwood enclosure (I do not know the German name for this tree). Winding around it are palisades of greenery, giving it the seclusion of a private cabinet. It is very beautiful. From thence I went to visit the kitchen-garden, which is very large and handsome. I wished to see what Monsieur de Navailles, my son's former governor, used to admire so greatly. In Monsieur Colbert's days he used to come to Sceaux on purpose to visit it. They would show him the beautiful cascades, the wonderful water gallery, the chestnut parlour, the archways ; in short, everything attractive that Sceaux could boast of, but he would admire none of it. When, however, they came to the garden where the salads grow, he broke forth, " Certes, a beautiful chicory." So I too went to see the beautiful chicory. When I returned to my chamber I heard that Madame du Maine was in hers on the third floor, so I climbed up there to visit her, though not without much panting, I admit. I think I told you last year about the charming gallery and closet Madame du Maine has had made for herself here, so I shall say nothing about it to-day. The Duchesse de Bourgogne having sent for Madame du Maine to come and join the gaming, I came down again to my own chamber, and had settled myself before my open window to read, when in came several ladies, who prevented me. They kept me until six o'clock. At half-past six the King sent for

me to come to Madame de Maintenon's antechamber, where there was to be music. The musical composition was quite new and took the form of an ode in honour of the King by Abbé Ganest, in which the naval battle was not forgotten. The King thought it so charming that he ordered it to be played through twice. That lasted until a quarter to nine o'clock. After the music was finished I watched the gaming for nearly an hour, then returned to my own chamber until supper-time.

How to make a Saint do as one wishes.

2nd November, 1704, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

If the Archduke had seen the Princesse d'Anspach's[1] beautiful figure, he would perhaps have been more willing to turn Lutheran than she was to turn Catholic, because such visions are often more eloquent and convince people more easily than any Jesuit Father's arguments. Poor Saint Anthony of Padua is very unhappy at present, because he has been put in irons. . . . My son told me this story the other day. He heard it from a certain Chevalier de Clermont, who sailed for a long time with a Portuguese ship. Once upon a time there arose a terrible storm. The captain ran to his sea-chest and brought out a little figure which he placed between two candles in a corner. It was Saint Anthony, and he besought him earnestly to put an end to the storm. The tempest, however, continued to rage. "Make haste," said the captain to the saint, "or it will be the worse for you." Still the weather did not calm. He sent for irons and put them on the little saint's feet, but it wasn't any use. Then he took a rope and tied it round his body and flung him out over the water, until he hung nearly touching the surface. He then called up a Turk and ordered him to brandish his sword, but not to cut the cord until he gave the signal. Then, at last, the storm began to abate. The captain pulled up the saint again and said to the chevalier, "You Frenchmen may laugh at our behaviour, but I assure you there are some saints who have to be threatened and ill-treated, or they will do nothing worth while."

[1] The Princesse d'Anspach refused the Archduke Charles (who became Emperor) rather than become a Catholic. She became the wife of George II of England.

Leibnitz and the Christian religions.

11*th November*, 1704, Marly.

To MONSIEUR ETIENNE POLIER DE BOTTENS.

I thought you might have seen Leibnitz at Berlin. He has the reputation of being very learned, and is in touch with the learned men of every country from here to China. In addition, he is very good company and can take a joke. He writes well in all sorts of languages. Lately he has been very busy trying to reconcile all three Christian religions, and has exchanged many communications on the subject with the late Bishop of Meaux. But they simply could not be brought into accord, and that was all about it. . . .

The surrender of Landau, and the Duke of Marlborough's looks.

13*th December*, 1704, Marly.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

I knew long ago that Landau had surrendered. My daughter told me before even the King had been informed of it, but I didn't mention it to him. I never like to be the bearer of bad news. . . .

Lord Marlborough must have changed greatly. Twenty-four years ago he was one of the handsomest men you could possibly see. . . .

The defeat of the French, and a prophecy.

13*th December*, 1704, Marly.

To the RAUGRAVINE AMELIA-ELISABETH.

In times of war the proverb which says that everyone has his turn proves its truth. The French beat the English and Dutch for a long time, and now it is their turn to be beaten. The time, of course, will come when they will once more be victorious.

The devout Duc de Bourgogne.

14th December, 1704, Marly.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

It amuses me to hear you say that I have converted people here to my faith. Not at all. They are just the same now as I found them when I arrived. There is still a good deal of superstition in this country, but not so much as in Portugal, for we laugh at what goes on there. In Italy their superstition passes all belief, and I am sure that if the Duc de Bourgogne comes to the throne bigotry will gain the upper hand here. However, that doesn't worry me, for I shall not live to see it. The Duc de Bourgogne is unbelievably devout for his age. He goes no more to see plays, and will not hear the opera mentioned. He has had pious words set to the most beautiful airs from the operas so that he can sing them. He communicates every Sunday and Saint's day, and fasts so much that you would be sorry for him. He is as thin as a lathe. . . . Madame de Maintenon is not well. She has had a fever since the day before yesterday, and it has not left her yet. . . . There are long faces everywhere, but she is in no danger.

The humiliation of Marshal Tallard.

28th December, 1704, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

The King has no exotic fruits in his garden, but his native French fruit is splendid. I have never seen a pine-apple raw, but only in sweetmeats. . . . It must be very humiliating for Tallard[1] to come as a defeated enemy to the country where only a few years before he was shining as an ambassador. He can say with Mascarille, *J'étais César, me voilà Pompée.*

[1] Marshal Tallard, who was defeated at Blenheim, was taken as a prisoner of war to England, where formerly he had been French Ambassador.

CHAPTER XIII.

1705.

The general and the soldier who stole the cabbages.

3rd January, 1705, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

Here is a true story which I thought very pleasant. It happened in the days when the Duc de Luxembourg was commanding the King's army. He had given strict orders that there was to be no pillaging of the peasants in Flanders. Chancing to enter a garden, he found a soldier cutting the cabbages. This made Monsieur de Luxembourg very angry, and he raised his stick and belaboured the fellow with blows, while the wretch shouted all the time, "Oh, milord, stop beating me! I shall make you repent of this in a few days." Monsieur de Luxembourg grew still more angry, and went on beating until he was tired, while all the time the soldier kept on repeating, "I shall make you repent." Some days afterwards there was an attack, during which the Duke was told about a soldier who had greatly distinguished himself, and whose astounding exploits were worthy of a hero of romance. The general thought that he would like to see this soldier who had distinguished himself so greatly and sent for him. The soldier came, and then began to smile and said, "You remember how, when you were beating me for those cabbages, I threatened to make you repent of it? Well, admit now that you are sorry that you beat me." Thus did a brave soldier revenge himself on his general. I thought it was charming. . . .

Yesterday the King came to see me, and I thanked him humbly for the two thousand pistols he had so kindly sent me. He replied very politely that he had purposely refrained from coming to see me on New Year's Day lest I should think that he had only come to receive my thanks. Truly, there is no one in

France more gracious and pleasant than the King. When he is in an amiable mood, one cannot help loving him with all one's heart.

Madame de Bellemonds and Prince Rupert.

28th January, 1705, Marly.

To the RAUGRAVINE AMELIA-ELISABETH.

Here the cavaliers drink as readily with the serving wenches as with young ladies of quality, provided only that they are of a gay disposition. These girls are very fond of tippling, but to tell you the truth it is not the servants who get befuddled here so much as people of high degree. . . . It seems to me that Madame de Bellemonds is old enough to give up masquerades. I have heard it said that my uncle Robert [1] deceived her and pretended that he was going to marry her. They say that he disguised his lackey as a parson and they were married in this fashion. She was very young then, and my uncle was lodging in her father's house.

The Marshal's opinion of a saint.

29th January, 1705, Marly.

To the RAUGRAVINE AMELIA-ELISABETH.

The Queen of England wanted to go to Chaillot, where she intends to spend several days, as to-day is a holiday at the convent of Saint François-de-Sales. I have little faith in this Saint, knowing as I do what the elder Maréchal de Villeroy, who was very intimate with him, used to say: "Monsieur de Salle was a very great friend of mine, and has now become a great saint, but he was the stupidest man in the world."

[1] Known in England as Prince Rupert, third son of Elizabeth of Bohemia and Frederick V. He was Count Palatine of the Rhine and Duke of Bavaria, and afterwards Duke of Cumberland and Earl of Holderness. His life was that of a soldier of fortune. After serving under the Prince of Orange he came to England, where he was received with favour by his uncle, Charles I, who gave him a pension. During the Civil War he commanded Charles's army, and afterwards took service under Louis XIV, reserving, however, the right to return to England should Charles ever have need of him. This he did at the Restoration. In 1679 he was appointed a member of the Privy Council, but, apart from a few references to him in the letters of his sister, the Duchess of Hanover, little is known of the end of his life.

Madame writes prose without knowing it.

2nd February, 1705.

To MONSIEUR ETIENNE POLIER DE BOTTENS.

I am glad that you enjoyed my last letter, but I can truthfully say, like Jourdain in the play, "*J'ai fait de la prose sans le savoir*," because I cannot recall having said anything which could be compared with Voiture or Saint Evremond. I have not read Balzac's[1] works. I consider my letters sufficiently appreciated when they give you pleasure, because they are written for you to read, and you alone.

Madame does not wish her letters to appear in print.

3rd February, 1705.

To MONSIEUR ETIENNE POLIER DE BOTTENS.

I should be very much frightened if I were to see my letters in print. This time your friendship for me has blinded you, and makes my letters appear good to you when they are only mediocre.

The death of the Queen of Prussia.

14th February, 1705, Versailles.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

I can't tell you how overcome I was by the news of the terrible loss we have sustained in the person of the dear Queen of Prussia.[2] My eyes hurt so much that I cannot open them, and my head aches as well, because I have done nothing but weep since a quarter past eleven this morning, and it is now nearly five o'clock. I am afraid to contemplate my aunt's state of mind, and I am heartbroken with sorrow for her. Why did not God take me instead of the dear Queen, who should have been my aunt's joy and consolation for many years to come, whilst I am good for nothing and have already lived long enough? But we

[1] J.-L. Guez de Balzac (1594-1654), author of *Letters*, *Socrate Chretien* and *Aristippe*.

[2] Sophie-Charlotte, daughter of the Duchess of Hanover and god-daughter of Madame. She married, in 1684, the Elector of Brandenburg, afterwards Frederick III, King of Prussia.

must accept God's decree, and resign ourselves to His holy will. . . .

The new postmaster annoys Madame.

19*th February*, 1705, Marly.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

The way they treat my letters is disgusting. In the days of Monsieur de Louvois they read them as they do now, but at least they delivered them at the time when they were expected. But since this little toad of a Torcy has had charge of the postal department, he annoys me frightfully with regard to my letters, and I have never awaited a letter from Hanover so impatiently as I do now.

Madame consoles the Duchess of Hanover on her daughter's death.

8*th March*, 1705, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

The late Queen made herself beloved and respected by everyone, and you may be sure that her fame will endure for ever; but if she had had to go on living with such a weak stomach she would have become ill and miserable, and would have led a life of suffering. Now, however, she is free from all pain and she enjoys (as we Christians must believe) eternal happiness. . . . The idea you express when you say the dear Queen has passed like a flower is the same as Quinault expressed to Cybele when she was mourning the death of Athys:—

> *" Athys au printemps de son âge,*
> *Périt comme une fleur,*
> *Qu'un soudain orage*
> *Renverse et ravage."*

I am afraid the late Queen must have sung too much, because people who sing a lot usually die of consumption.

Madame's remedy for urticaria.

8th April, 1705, Versailles.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

Urticaria is not a disease of childhood. I had it myself four years ago, but the only remedy I used was to take a good dose of Lady Kent's powder to make me sweat freely, and the next day I was up and about again. . . . For several years now this ailment has been greatly the fashion, but it does not render one immune from anything else, because the same year I had a quartan fever lasting two months.

A clever robbery at the opera.

17th April, 1705, Marly.

To MONSIEUR ETIENNE POLIER DE BOTTENS.

The Lacedæmonians used to reward daring thefts, but they would have been ruined by the Parisians. One of the cleverest robberies I have heard of was that brought off by a man habited as an abbot. He brought a beautiful little boy with a handsome figure, well turned out, powdered and curled, into a box at the opera, where there were some ladies elegantly attired and covered with jewels.

"Ladies," he said, "would you be so kind as to allow the Count to watch the opera with you?" and he gave the name of some people of quality.

The ladies found the child very charming, and never doubted but that he was of noble family. They kissed him repeatedly, and the little count was so well trained and behaved so politely that they all wanted to hold him on their knees. At length the opera began and they settled down to watch the performance. The Count asked intelligent questions, and at length fell asleep on their knees, so they placed him on the seat behind them to be out of the way. He continued to feign sleep, but when their attention was riveted on the stage he cut off their jewels. During the fifth act the pretended tutor came back and said, "Come along, Count, the Countess, your mother, and your father are waiting for you."

The youngster said, "What, already? The opera is not finished, and it is so lovely."

The tutor replied with a stern glance, "No, come along," and to the ladies he said, "I am afraid the Count has been in your way."

They replied, "Oh, no. He is charming and so well brought up."

The tutor replied, "I shall tell the Countess, who is outside in her carriage, how good you have been, ladies, to her son. She will be much obliged to you."

The ladies kissed the Count, who went away after saluting them very politely; but when one of them turned to leave the play-house after the opera was finished they saw that she had no jewels on, nor diamond buckles on her sleeves and dress. They cried out, "Your jewels have been cut off."

She turned round and saw that the others were in the same state. There was no doubt that it was the work of the Count, and they rushed after him, but could not catch him.

Madame disapproves of bleedings and emetics.

18*th April*, 1705, Marly.

To the RAUGRAVINE AMELIA-ELISABETH.

The poor little Duc de Bretagne died last Monday. I am firmly convinced that the doctors dispatched the poor little prince into the other world with their blood lettings and emetics. But no one listens to me here, so I let them think what they please and keep my opinion to myself.

The raising of a blockade of Gibraltar.

25*th April*, 1705, Marly.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

There is nothing surprising in Leake's[1] having defeated de Pointis. The latter had to fight with five ships against thirty-five. Leake has nothing to be vain about, because a less skilful man than he could have done as much.

[1] The English Admiral Leake, who destroyed the blockading squadron at Gibraltar, off Marbella Point, on March 21st, 1705. Rooke had captured Gibraltar in the previous year.

What Madame told her doctor.

2nd May, 1705, Marly.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

When I chose my doctor, I warned him that he must not expect blind obedience from me. I would allow him to express his opinion, but he must not get angry if I did not always follow it. My health and my body are my own, and I expect, as I told him, to rule them after my own fashion.

Chess and George I.

10th May, 1705, Marly.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

Chess is quite a suitable game for the Elector of Brunswick.[1] One has only to think and not to talk while playing it. . . .

Why the Queen's children were unhealthy.

13th May, 1705, Versailles.

To the RAUGRAVINE AMELIA-ELISABETH.

I have heard that the Emperor no longer lives with his wife. If this is so, she will not have a son. It often happens that men of debauched life have few children. A doctor here who was asked why the Queen's children were never healthy, replied, "That is because the King only brings the rinsings of the glasses to the Queen."

Madame's pleasant lodging at Trianon-sous-Bois.

21st June, 1705, Trianon.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

I am very well lodged here, and have four chambers and a cabinet where I write to you. It looks out over the *Sources*, as they are called. These consist of a little wood so thick that even in the height of summer the sun never penetrates into it; fifty or more springs rise from the ground, forming little streams

[1] Afterwards George I of England.

hardly a foot across, so that one can step over them. They are bordered with turf, and form little islands just large enough to hold a table and chairs, so that we can play ombre here. At both sides there are broad steps because it is all on a slope. The water runs over these steps as well, and makes a cascade at each side. So you can see it is a very pleasant spot. At my side the trees grow almost into my windows, and this set of lodgings, allotted to the Princesse de Conti, the Dauphin, the Duchesse and myself, is called Trianon-sous-Bois. Unlike Marly, where no one may come without being invited, anyone may come in the afternoon, and gaming goes on all day until it is time for supper. . . .

It would seem, from what people say, that there are children in the age of innocence through whom the spirits speak, because Madame de Nevers learnt from the spirit about Madame de Montespan when she gave birth to Madame la Duchesse. A child looked into the glass and told all that was happening at Tournay in Madame de Montespan's chamber, and Madame de Nevers was at Paris. . . .

The Duke of Marlborough and the fortune-teller.

9th July, 1705, Marly.

To the Duchess of Hanover.

I must tell you the story they have invented at Paris to explain why Lord Marlborough did not engage in a battle with Maréchal de Villars. They say that he likes to consult successful wizards and soothsayers. Now there is one at Frankfort who has a good reputation. He sent for her and questioned her up and down to find out whether he would be fortunate in this campaign. She said that fortune would be with him so long as he guarded against one thing, which was to provoke a fight with a general who should be wearing on his sword a ribbon given to him by a beautiful Princess. Thereupon he is supposed to have sent spies to Villars' army to see whether he had a bunch of ribbons on his sword. They returned and said that he had not, so everything was prepared for the battle. But next day Lord Marlborough again sent a spy to the French camp, who reported on his return that now Villars had ribbons on his sword. Straight way others were sent to find out from whom he had obtained them, and his valet declared that they came from the Princesse

de Conti. His lordship immediately withdrew without further thought of attacking. If only Villars's servants had known what would be the result of the affair, they might have named me instead of the Princesse de Conti, and then, thanks to this deception, his lordship would have been defeated, according to the prophecy! I can't imagine how people can invent such tarradiddles.

Monsieur de Louvois, the emerald bracelet, and the medium.

16*th July*, 1705, Marly.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

An incident happened to Monsieur de Louvois, too, which led him to believe in spirits. He had heard of someone who was very skilful in calling them forth from a glass of water. At first he wouldn't believe it, and laughed at all they told him. . . . At this time he was in love with Madame Dufrenoy, and that very morning, finding himself alone in her chamber, he took an emerald bracelet in order to annoy her and make her hunt everywhere for it. No one had seen him, so no one could know anything about the affair. He then came to the séance, and ordered the evocation to begin. The child looked into the glass, and Monsieur de Louvois told him to ask the spirit what he was thinking about. The child replied that he was certainly thinking about a very beautiful lady, wearing such and such a dress, who was searching everywhere in great distress.

"Ask him what she is seeking," he said.

"An emerald bracelet," replied the child.

"Let the spirit point out the person who has taken it, and tell what he has done with it," said Monsieur de Louvois.

The child suddenly began to laugh. "But I can see the man," said he, "he is dressed like you, and is as like you as two drops of water. He is taking the bracelet from the lady's toilet table and is putting it in his pocket together with a golden box."

At this Monsieur de Louvois became pale as death. He drew the box from his pocket, and since then he believes everything. He believes in sorcerers, in fortune-tellers, and the whole lot of them.

Madame's opinion of scholars.

30*th July*, 1705, Marly.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

Monsieur Leibnitz must have a very high degree of intelligence to make him such an agreeable companion. It is seldom that scholars are clean and do not smell bad, and that they have a sense of humour.

The manners of the Court.

2nd August, 1705, Marly.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

One cannot tell nowadays who is who. When the King goes walking everyone is covered. If the Duchesse de Bourgogne goes out, she gives her arm to one lady and the others walk beside her. So no one can distinguish who she is. Here in the drawing room and at Trianon in the gallery all the men sit in the presence of the Dauphin and the Duchesse de Bourgogne. Some even lie full length on the sofas. . . .

The vices of the age.

30*th September*, 1705, Fontainebleau.

To the RAUGRAVINE AMELIA-ELISABETH.

I have nothing much to do with nuns and have never in my life visited those at Saint-Cyr. It was one of my women of the bedchamber who taught me basket making. I cannot deny that the Jesuit College has not a very good reputation. But in that place, as in any other, a person who is not himself vicious runs little risk, and Prince Talmont was exposed to unpleasantness rather than to any actual danger. Nothing, however, is more ordinary in England than this unnatural vice, as I was told by an Englishman himself, and all those who followed Lord Portland to Paris led a terrible life with the debauchees of Paris. Lord Westmorland, Lord Raby, and three or four others did not hesitate to make public what their inclinations were, or so I was told. If people like these make you shudder, my dear Amelisa, you must surely see very few people. Bible reading makes no

difference to it. Ruffigny, who was an elder of the church at Charenton, is one of the most addicted to this sort of thing, and his brother, La Caillemotte, who was a member of the reformed faith, and a great reader of the Bible, was worse than anyone here, and was much plagued about it when people were annoyed at him. La Caillemotte used to say, " I have to love men, because I am much too ugly to be loved by women." There are many in Germany, too, who practice this vice. When the Graf von Sitzendorf, who was the German ambassador here, saw a well-shaped page, he used to lose his colour and become so excited that it was shameful to see him. You ask why people persist in tasting such forbidden pleasures, but since the days of Adam it has always been so, that forbidden fruits taste better than those that are allowed.

The comedies of Molière.

5th November, 1705, Marly.

To the RAUGRAVINE AMELIA-ELISABETH.

Molière has written some pretty comedies, but, like you, I think that *Tartuffe* is the best. The *Misanthrope* is also good, and so is the *Femmes Savantes*. To enjoy *Pourceaugnac* and *Monsieur Jourdain* one must know this country well, and especially Paris, better than you know them.

The ugliness of Monsieur Pelisson.

8th November, 1705, Marly.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

Sapho must surely have been mad, in spite of all her genius. to have killed herself for love of Phaon. Mademoiselle de Scudéry would not, I imagine, choose to resemble her except from the point of view of learning, because she has always been a virtuous woman. Monsieur Pelisson's love was not in the least dishonourable to her. He was a hideously ugly man, with a square face, completely covered with the marks of smallpox—white scales on a yellow background. His eyes were red and bloodshot, continually weeping. His mouth stretched from ear to ear, with thick white lips and blackened teeth. So you see Mademoiselle de Scudéry could have dealings with such a

man without giving rise to any scandal. His figure was no better, for he had thick shoulders, no neck, and no calves. In fact, he was quite a monster, but very intelligent and learned.

The Play contrasted with the Church.

9th December, 1705, Versailles.

To the RAUGRAVINE AMELIA-ELISABETH.

The *Mort de Pompée* is a fine piece, and the *Baron de la Crasse* is most amusing. The ceremony of the King's toilet is faithfully portrayed in it. If everyone controlled their passions as they do in Corneille's serious plays, they would be more lovable than damnable. The Church shows us in a disagreeable fashion how virtue is rewarded and vice punished, but at the play the same thing is shown to us in an amusing manner. To listen for an hour to a buffoon, whom one may not contradict, holding forth from his pulpit may be useful, but it is not pleasant.

Madame's son speaks of serious things.

4th February, 1706, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

My son does not agree with Monsieur Leibnitz, because he maintains that unity is found in God alone. He has tried to make me understand this, but I acknowledge my ignorance, and I do not understand a single word. He knows a little more about such things than men of his sort usually do, and it suits him ten times better to talk of serious things than to play the fool, because it is quite natural to him to be serious-minded, but, unhappily, he won't believe it.

The death of the King's almoner.

7th February, 1706, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

Yesterday morning at four o'clock, Cardinal de Coislin died. He was chief almoner to the King, and since Cardinal de Bouillon's disgrace he filled the charge of grand almoner. The King is going to give the charge to Cardinal de Janson, who is returning

from Rome. The worthy Cardinal de Coislin is regretted by everyone. He was a good and kindly man, and never mixed himself up in any intrigue. He was extraordinarily charitable, and founded a great many charities in his diocese of Orleans. . . .

Coffee for chastity.

11th February, 1706, Versailles.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

Coffee is not as necessary to ministers of the reformed faith as to Catholic priests. The latter are not allowed to marry, and coffee is said to induce chastity.

Every day I rub my foot with Monsieur Altoviti's oil. All the other remedies I have tried are useless, amongst others are oil of Iverna, hot wine in which red roses and herbs have been stewed, and salt in water. . . . I never drink tea, coffee, nor chocolate.

An entertaining play, and ancient gossip.

17th March, 1706, Versailles.

To the RAUGRAVINE AMELIA-ELISABETH.

You are quite right in thinking that the *Grondeur Monsieur Guchard* is an entertaining play, but it needs to be well played. The original of the *Grondeur* is a doctor called Lebel, who was once my doctor. . . .

It is a Count and not a Marquis de Furstemberg whom you have at Hanover just now. . . . His mother, the Comtesse de Furstemberg,[1] lives on her estates in France. She is not gallant nowadays, but used to be very much so, and I expect she would find it difficult to name the fathers of her children. The eldest is more like the Cardinal than the youngest, who is at Hanover. It is quite true that he fought a duel, and that is why he had to leave the country.

[1] The Comtesse was said to have been the mistress of Cardinal de Furstemberg, her husband's uncle.

The game of the bean.

25th March, 1706, Versailles.

To the Duchess of Hanover.

. . . The bean is not given to the Virgin Mary. This is how the game is played. They cut as many pieces as there are people at the table, then the cake is brought in ready cut, and a child distributes the pieces. As it is taken round, one person says "Phibé," and the child replies "For whom?" The reply is "For Our Lord," and the child draws a piece. The next one says "For the Blessed Virgin," and the child draws another piece. The cake is distributed thus round the table. If it is Our Lord who wins the bean, then the master of the house is King. If the Blessed Virgin, then the lady of highest rank is Queen of the house. This game used to give the ladies of the Court great privileges, but the King has abolished the custom. As lately, however, as in the time of Louis XIII, if a lady of the Court had the bean and was queen, she disposed of any charge, whatever it might be, which fell vacant during the twenty-four hours. Hence the proverb which says that the bean brings luck. If there were no charges vacant, the Queen would ask the King for favours, which he had to grant her. . . .

Madame's son gives up the study of German.

22nd April, 1706, Marly.

To the Raugravine Louisa.

The story of Monsieur de Degenfeldt's lackey is amusing, and it reminds me of what once happened to my son. He is like all Frenchmen who do not know how to speak German very well. I made him have a German master, and after he had studied for four whole years I told him that I would like him to talk to me sometimes in German. One day when we were in the gallery at Versailles something strange happened, and my son wished to quote the German proverb: *Art lasst nicht von Art* (*bon chien chasse de race*). He shouted out with emphasis, and as if it were a fine sentence, *Arsch lasst nicht von Arsch.* I shuddered, and thought he meant to say something lewd. "Hold your tongue, fool!" I cried. Then I investigated what he meant to say, and discovered that it was quite a simple idea.

He had just seen something strange which brought the proverb to his mind. When he had explained to me in French what he wished to say, I told him the difference between *art* and *arsch*. He laughed fit to make himself ill, and said it was quite evident that he could not learn German; since then he has given it up entirely.

Trophies of victory.

16*th May*, 1706, Marly.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

The King's armies have been as successful in Germany as in Italy. . . . At Hagenau the garrison, which was two thousand six hundred strong, has surrendered. They are only Saxons. Their flags arrived yesterday, but I have not been able to see them nor the Brandenbourg standards either. They are only on view in the *Sanctuary*, in Madame de Maintenon's lodgings, where profane people like myself do not go. . . .

An old rumour disposed of.

20*th May*, 1706, Marly.

To the RAUGRAVINE AMELIA-ELISABETH.

Can you possibly believe that our King of England[1] is a suppositious child and not his mother's son? I would wager my head that there is no truth in it. To begin with, he is as like his mother as two drops of water, secondly, a lady who is not at all kindly disposed towards the Queen, told me, simply for truth's sake, that she was present at the birth on purpose to see what happened, and, mark this, she saw the child attached to the umbilical cord, and that put an end to any doubt she had. He is undoubtedly his mother's son.

Lord Marlborough's success.

30*th May*, 1706, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

. . . We need some consolation, because during the thirty-five years I have been in France I have never passed through

[1] The Old Pretender.

such an unhappy time. Every hour we hear of some new catastrophe. . . .

Maréchal de Villars' manners are romantic, so much I grant you, but he is a better soldier than the Maréchal de Villeroy. Prince Louis has no need to exert himself very much. Lord Marlborough does that for both of them with, alas, too much effect. Rabenhaupt's saying might be used of him, "*Bonjour, monsieur, vous faites un vacarme du diable.*" People who believe in sorcery think that he must have made a pact with the devil, such unheard-of successes is he having.

Complexions, and dust.

3rd June, 1706, Versailles.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

I know what it is like to be exposed to the burning sun while out hunting, as I often remain with the hunt from early morning until five o'clock in the evening, and in the summer even until nine o'clock, and I come back with my face all burnt up and as red as a lobster. That is why my skin is so brown and rough. No one minds dust here. On a recent journey it was so thick that it was impossible to see in the carriages, yet the King did not withdraw the Cavaliers who were galloping alongside. The night air out of doors does me no harm, and at Marly I often go for a walk in the moonlight.

Many thanks for the slate tablets. . . . I am putting them in my library, because it is astonishing how many books I have lost. Henceforth, when I lend any I shall write them down, and when they are returned I shall wipe them off. . . .

Jean Cavalier and the King.

10th June, 1706, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

. . . The King would be very much surprised if any one told him that I know the whole of the conversation that he has had with Cavalier.[1] . . . I thought the latter very bold to

[1]Jean Cavalier, leader of the Camisards. He surrendered to Villars on the promise of a pension, but was not well received by Louis, so he withdrew to England, where he took service in the army and fought against the French. When he died in 1740 he was Governor of Jersey.

have told the King to his face where he got his arms and munitions from. Villars, doubtless, must have exceeded in his personal interview what the King gave him permission to promise. . . .

The opening of letters.

17th June, 1706, Marly.

To the RAUGRAVINE AMELIA-ELISABETH.

. . . Although the seals appear intact, it does not follow that the letters are safe, because they know how to open them and shut them again. I know how they do it, because my son has shown me. At every Court they are suspicious, and open letters unless a special messenger brings them by his own hands.

Lord Halifax's pomp will not suit the Elector, because it means expense. . . .

The cowardice of the Archduke.

20th June, 1706, Marly.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

. . . I thank you for the account of the siege of Barcelona, which is correct in every detail except with regard to the courage displayed by the Archduke. With all deference to you, it is false! An Englishman called Lord Russell, who was taken prisoner there, tells how the worthy Archduke was treated like a baby, and rushed from cellar to cellar to be out of danger of the bombs. He is as great a child as the King of Spain, so he said, and he added in the most natural way, "Aren't we all stupid to kill each other for the sake of those two ninnies of kings?"

The Duc d'Orleans is pleased to go to the wars.

24th June, 1706, Marly.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

. . . My son is going to Italy to command as Generalissimo. The Duc de Vendôme goes to Flanders. The Maréchal de Villeroy wrote to his Majesty that he perceived that he was the most unfortunate man in the world, and did not wish to expose

the King's troops to the consequences of his bad luck, so he humbly prayed permission to leave the army and return here. It was as a result of this letter that they made these changes. I can't tell you how pleased my son is. He holds his head up, and seems to have grown inches taller. . . . Villeroy will be second in command to my son, and Maréchal de Marsin goes to Germany. . . .

The cat-and-dog life of the English.

19*th August*, 1706, Marly.

To the RAUGRAVINE AMELIA-ELISABETH.

The English hate each other. That can be plainly seen at the Court of Saint-Germain, where they live a cat-and-dog life.

Madame's son on campaign in Italy.

12*th September*, 1706, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

My son has something else in his head than trying to make a conquest of ladies. It is Turin he wishes to capture. He takes the business too much to heart, and in order to revive the courage of the demoralised soldiers, he exposes himself to risks that make me shudder.

Madame's son is defeated and wounded.

14*th September*, 1706.

To MONSIEUR ETIENNE POLIER DE BOTTENS.

Alas, I have just had cruel news of my son—Maréchal Marsin and the generals would not follow his advice and go out to attack the enemy. They stayed in their lines and the enemy broke through. They were thirty-five thousand men to eight thousand. My son received two wounds. One in his hip, which he concealed for a long time, and the other in his left arm between the elbow and wrist, grazing the small bone of his arm. The surgeon assures me that neither wound is dangerous.

Madame's fears for her son.

15*th September*, 1706.

To Monsieur Etienne Polier de Bottens.

God has sent me a terrible trial, because nothing is dearer to me than my son's welfare. As long as he is only wounded I can endure it, but if the horrible disaster should happen that he should die, I do not think I could survive it, and I feel that it would kill me. . . . I am sending you Lardy's letter, so that you can form your own opinion of my son's wound. . . . It is quite true that Maréchal de Marsin paid for his bad advice with his life.

Details of the Italian defeat.

16*th September*, 1706, Versailles.

To the Duchess of Hanover.

The day on which you last wrote to me was an unhappy one for me, because Maréchal de Marsin and the other generals would not listen to my son. He wanted to leave the camp with his army and attack the enemy. The others would not consent, and produced an order which forbade them to attempt it. So unfortunately my son had to follow their accursed advice. The enemy attacked the entrenchments at a spot where Monsieur de la Feuillade had neglected to fortify them, because two rivers flowed by. He had forgotten, however, that in this heat they had gone dry, and the enemy crossed them. Thirty-five thousand men against eight thousand! They forced their way through, as you can imagine, and relieved Turin. My son defended his army as well as he could, and was wounded in two places. . . . His doctor writes that he is in no danger, but Maréchal de Marsin paid for his bad advice with his life.

Madame de Maintenon's knowledge of war.

28*th September*, 1706, Versailles.

To the Duchess of Hanover.

The King had expressly forbidden my son to do anything without the advice of Maréchal de Marsin, a timid man, who

would attempt nothing without consulting Madame de Maintenon. She, however, knows as much about war as my little dog Teti. . . . When a disaster occurs she weeps and laments.

Manners in high places.

4th November, 1706, Marly.

To the RAUGRAVINE AMELIA-ELISABETH.

Not to acknowledge a salute is to show oneself inordinately proud, and one hurts oneself more than anyone else, because the higher one is placed the more careful one should be as to manners. No one could be more courteous than our King, but his children and grandchildren are not at all polite.

Madame's son arrives home.

19th November, 1706, Versailles.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

Mademoiselle de Poellnitz is sensible to follow Saint-Paul's advice, "He who marries does well, but he who does not marry does better." That would have been my opinion if I had been allowed to follow my own devices, but fate decreed otherwise. I have good news to give you of my son. He arrived here last Monday quite unexpectedly by the post chaise. Thank God, he is in good health, but he will remain maimed for life. He can only move his thumb and first finger. The three others are retracted, and he will never be able to stretch them out. If he had not worn a cuirass he would have received fifteen mortal wounds.

A shameful peace.

2nd December, 1706, Versailles.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

I have never heard of anything more shameful than the peace which King Augustus has signed.[1] He must have been raving or drunk to accept such terms. I couldn't believe he would be so cowardly, and I blush for our nation.

[1] The Peace of Altranstädt.

CHAPTER XIV.

1707—1708.

Madame at dinner and at supper.

3rd February, 1707, Versailles.

To the RAUGRAVINE AMELIA-ELISABETH.

All the year round I dine alone and I make as much haste with my meals as possible. There is nothing more annoying than to sit eating all alone surrounded by twenty lackeys who watch one chewing and count the mouthfuls. So I hasten with my dinner and finish with it in less than half an hour. In the evening I sup with the King, and there are four or five of us at the table. Everyone swallows his meal without saying a word, as if it were a convent.

The frigid Court at Hanover.

3rd March, 1707, Marly.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

It is not surprising that the old gay good humour is no longer to be found at Hanover. The Elector[1] is so cold that he freezes everything into ice. Neither his father nor his uncle were of that nature. Things will become even worse with time, when the Prince-Electoral will have a voice in things. He does not know what is becoming in a Prince . . . I should like to tell him frankly just once what I think of him.

[1] Afterwards George I of England.

Feats of swallowing.

9th March, 1707.

To MONSIEUR ETIENNE POLIER DE BOTTENS.

A few years ago I saw at Paris a girl without arms who did everything you say the one in Switzerland does. As for the man we saw yesterday, Maréchal has just examined him. He searched his mouth and tapped his stomach, and he is convinced that he swallows stones, pitch and resin without any trickery. He performed another feat for Maréchal that he did not attempt before us, which was that after he had swallowed a number of stones he placed a very large one on his stomach and let them try to break it with blows from a hammer, and it did him no harm. He swears that his mother had the same faculty as he has. He is a good-looking fellow and appears to be quite healthy. He is not thin, and is so jovial that one has to believe that he suffers no pain.

The rank of Grandson of France.

27th March, 1707, Versailles.

To the RAUGRAVINE AMELIA-ELISABETH.

I notice that you confuse my son with a Prince of the Blood. He is not one. His rank is that of Grandson of France, which is superior to that of the Princes of the Blood, and he has more privileges than they have. France's Grandsons may salute Queens, sit down in their presence and drive in their carriages, but the Princes of the Blood may not . . . They have a Master of the Horse, a chief Almoner and a head Major-domo. The Princes of the Blood have none of these, nor have they body-guards as my son has . . . I am always very glad to hear about what is going on in Germany. Like old coach-drivers who love to hear the crack of their whips after they can no longer bowl along the great roads.

Madame's son departs for Spain.

30th March, 1707, Versailles.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

I am feeling sad because my poor son is going to say good-bye to me to-morrow and will leave the day after for Spain. I shall not see him again for a whole year.

Madame finds religious books dull.

14th April, 1707, Versailles.

To the RAUGRAVINE AMELIA-ELISABETH.

I have heard a great deal of tittle-tattle about the Princesse de Hohenzollern. She is said to be very gallant. Persons of her sort have a great deal of money given to them when they are young, but when they are old they find that they themselves have to do the giving . . . I don't know whether religious books are more agreeable in English than in German or French. But I find them all dull with the exception of the Bible ; I never tire of it.

Madame's collection of medals.

28th April, 1707, Versailles.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

Chateauneuf brought me the operas and medals the other day, for which I thank you very much. But you should have sent me those which are against France as well. My collection[1] is an historical one, and I have the worst ones which were struck in the days of King William. We bear you no malice here on their account. The King himself, as well as his ministers, possesses them.

The campaign in Spain.

19th May, 1707, Marly.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

An hour ago I received a letter from my son It begins with the words : " The town and Kingdom of Valentia, Madame,

[1] Madame is believed to have bequeathed her collection of medals to her grandson, Louis d'Orleans, who gave his own collection to the Abbaye de St. Geneviève in 1742. In 1791 the collection of St. Geneviève was added to the King's collection, but, on account of the disturbances of the Revolution, it seems impossible to tell now which of the coins in the national collection in the Bibliothèque Nationale belonged to Madame. As, however, the catalogues went to the Bibliothèque Nationale it is more than probable that the coins are there too.

have at length submitted. This is a pleasant country, full of orange trees, jasmines, pomegranates, and all sorts of fruits. In short, it is very different from the dreadful country through which we had to pass in order to get here. The enemy has withdrawn to nine leagues from here and is retiring to Catalonia, so I do not expect to have any more difficulty with the reduction of Aragon" . . . Almost all his followers are ill, and I am afraid that he may be too.

News of victories in Spain.

2nd June, 1707, Marly.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

When they woke me last Monday my son's head lackey came with the pleasant news that the town of Saragossa and the whole Kingdom of Aragon had surrendered to his master. What pleased me most was that the enemy had twice as many men as he had and that there were cannons in the town, while he had none. If the soldiers had stood their ground they would have defeated him, but he ordered his Hussars to attack their fourteen squadrons, which took fright as did also four battalions of infantry, and they all withdrew to the other side of the piece of water called the Ebro. Then the town sent a deputation to make terms, but my son declared that he would make none unless they handed over the Inquisition to him, which is a great battlemented and fortified building, also the gate and the bridges. The deputies said they had no power to do so and my son advanced on the town with his cavalry, having placed his infantry in such a position that it could not be seen how many he had. Then he fired many volleys into the square. They cannot be used to cannon fire in that country, because it threw them into such a panic that the deputation returned hastily and accepted all my son demanded. He preserved them from being pillaged, which they were afraid, amongst other things, would happen . . . The King, the Dauphin, the Duc and Duchesse de Bourgogne and the whole Court have come to visit me and share my joy. Only the old woman has not come and has sent me no message of any sort.

Danger threatens Toulon.

14th August, 1707, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

If the King loses Toulon it will be a hindrance to peace, because he will leave nothing undone to regain that town . . . King Augustus makes me tired the way he behaves. He is ruining himself to build his mistress a house of diamonds . . . It is unheard of.

Another victory in Spain.

27th October, 1707, Versailles.

To the RAUGRAVINE AMELIA-ELISABETH.

My son has taken the town of Lerida by assault. It resisted heroically. Monks and women rushed to the breach and helped to defend the town, but our soldiers held out and all the defenders were driven back into the castle. The Prince de Darmstadt sent to beg my son to allow the monks and women to leave the castle, but he sent back word that they had all behaved so courageously in defending the town that it was only fair that they should do as much for the castle, and he allowed no one to leave. It is hoped to reduce the citadel by hunger. God grant we may, because it would be no mean honour for my son. Two great generals have failed to take this town—Monsieur le Prince[1] and the Comte d'Harcourt, a prince of the House of Lorraine.

A song about Madame's son.

24th November, 1707, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

On the 11th of this month the citadel of Lerida surrendered to my son. Before he set out for Spain his enemies made a spiteful song about him to the tune of "*Joconde.*" I showed it to him, but he only laughed and said: "It is pretty well done, and quite apt. I forgive them." Here is the first verse:

[1] The Great Condé.

" Gendre et neveu de ce grand Roy
Vous allez donc paroistre
Encore une seconde foy.
Vous vous ferez cognoistre
Sans consulter dans l'advenir
Tout le monde public—etc."

The dangers of scouting Hussars.

24th November, 1707, Versailles.

To the RAUGRAVINE AMELIA-ELISABETH.

I see with the greatest joy that the dear Palatinate is beginning to recover. But take care! Villars' Hussars go scouting even as far as the outskirts of Frankfort, so do not travel without an escort.

Madame catches alight.

3rd November, 1707.

To MONSIEUR ETIENNE POLIER DE BOTTENS.

I nearly had a terrible accident and thought I was going to be burnt alive. We had had a very long chase, so the King did not dine until half-past three and we did not leave the table until nearly five o'clock. My candles had been lit and I sat down to write, but since I had had no food in the morning, and had consequently eaten an enormous dinner, I fell asleep as soon as I picked up a letter of Madame de Beuvron's to glance through it. My head-dress caught fire and I awoke to the fact that I was ablaze. I tried to put it out with my hands but the flames were too high. I was alone and had to call for help. The fire was put out, but some sparks fell on my eyelids and head and burnt them.

The superintendent of the King's buildings.

9th June, 1708, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

Monsieur d'Antin,[1] the legitimate son of Madame de Montes-

[1] Louis Henri Pardaillon, only son of Madame de Montespan by her husband, the Duc d'Antin. He was a persistent sycophant, and the memoirs of the time are full of references to his earnest endeavours to

pan, has been granted Mansard's[1] post, which brings him in fifty thousand francs. Moreover, the King spends ten millions every year on buildings, of which one million goes to the superintendent. Besides this he has the gift of two or three hundred positions, a concession which is worth money to him. So the post of superintendent of buildings is a very lucrative one.

Victories in Flanders; and a curious story of the surrender of Ghent.

11*th July*, 1708, Fontainebleau.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

Last Saturday Monsieur de Gacé brought the news that Ghent had surrendered, but that the citadel still held out. On Monday the Comte de la Mothe sent young Fretteville to announce that not only had the citadel at Ghent capitulated, but that the town of Bruges had fallen into our hands, without any bloodshed. The castle at Ghent, however, cost two people their lives and that in a curious fashion. When they opened the door of the citadel a citizen who did not approve of Ghent being surrendered to the French, let down his breeches and presented his behind to the sentinel. Affronted and enraged, the soldier let him have the contents of his gun on the spot, and he fell stone dead. One of his friends killed the soldier to revenge him, and thus the war finished.

Madame's son continues his victorious career in Spain.

21*st July*, 1708, Fontainebleau.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

My son has taken Tortosa. The besieged garrison held out obstinately. At last they made a sortie during the night of the ninth which cost the lives of three hundred of my son's men. He himself was in the entrenchments, and it is very

win favour with the King. During his mother's lifetime he was not successful, but after her death in 1707 Louis XIV began to take more notice of him. He has left some short memoirs published in the Transactions of the Société des Bibliophiles Français.

[1] King Louis XIV's architect (1646-1708), great-nephew of the great architect Mansard (1598-1666). They both built many of the important buildings of Paris.

fortunate that he was not killed. On the tenth they asked for a parley. The governor, a certain Comte d'Effern, sent hostages and terms of surrender, which, however, did not suit my son. He drew up his own terms and sent back the hostages to the governor, saying that if the latter did not sign the capitulation at once he would immediately attack. The inhabitants of the town did not want to risk that and signed everything . . . One clause of the capitulation provided that they should also give up a strong castle called Alley which is situated in the mountains. It is occupied by two thousand men and cuts the line of communication between the Kingdoms of Aragon and Valentia.

The triumph of Madame's son displeases the courtiers.

11*th August*, 1708, Fontainebleau.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

The taking of Tortosa makes me heartily glad, all the more so, perhaps, because the princes who remained here, such as Monsieur le Duc, the Prince de Conti, Monsieur du Maine and the Comte de Toulouse, thought it was an impossible feat. Monsieur le Duc used to say to Madame d'Orleans in front of the King, with a sneer, that my son had set about the siege badly and that he could not take the town. But the most satisfactory part of the business was that in order to make a jest of me they sent Monsieur Dangeau to me one morning to congratulate me, saying that Tortosa had fallen and I had received a special courier, and that very evening the Marquis de Lambert arrived bearing the good news that in truth the town had surrendered. I wish you could have seen the vexed looks of Monsieur le Duc and the Prince de Conti. They could not have been more crestfallen if they had heard that they were going to die. I was also glad that the King seemed pleased about it, and that this time he did not share the vexation that my son's triumph was causing the others but seemed to be proud of his nephew.

The day of reckoning.

1st December, 1708, Versailles.

To the RAUGRAVINE AMELIA-ELISABETH.

To-day is the first of December, the day when all my creditors present themselves and must be paid. I have already handed over a hundred and fifty pistols.

A son born to George I's daughter.

8th December, 1707.

To MONSIEUR ETIENNE POLIER DE BOTTENS.

My aunt the Electress has had a great joy. The news has arrived that her grand-daughter, the Princess Royal of Prussia,[1] has been happily delivered of a prince. It is the great-grandson of my aunt, both through his father and his mother. She will be his godmother, as well as Queen Anne,[2] the State of Holland, the Swiss Cantons and the King of Prussia. He will be given the names of his grandfathers and will be called Frederick-Ludwig as well as Prince of Orange and Neuchâtel.

Madame rebukes the Duchess de Bourgogne.

16th December, 1708, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

The Queen of Spain was so angry with her sister for being rude to me, that she deputed my son to see that she made her peace with me . . . The King asked my son what it was all about, and countenanced his telling the Duchess de Bourgogne to put herself right with me, saying that if she continued to treat me in such a manner that I had anything to complain of he would withhold his favour from her. So the Duchess told my son to tell me that she desired nothing so much as to live amiably with me. I went straight away to her and said:

[1] Sophia-Dorothea, grand-daughter of Sophia, Electress of Hanover, was the daughter of her eldest son, George-Ludwig, afterwards George I of England. She married the then Crown Prince, afterwards King Frederick William I.

[2] Anne of England.

"Madame, my son has just given me great pleasure by assuring me that in future you will treat me better than you have hitherto done, and I shall try to do nothing to displease you. Such has never been my desire and I have been more unfortunate than culpable in having done so." She became very red and confused and said: "You mistake my shyness for aversion." "But why," I replied, "should you be so timid with me who have no desire but to honour you and think well of you?" "Let us forget the past," she said, "and I hope that in future you will be better pleased with me." "I shall certainly be so," I replied, "provided that you behave in a better manner towards me." Then she changed the subject . . . Monsieur de Vendôme has returned here. He has grown enormously fat.

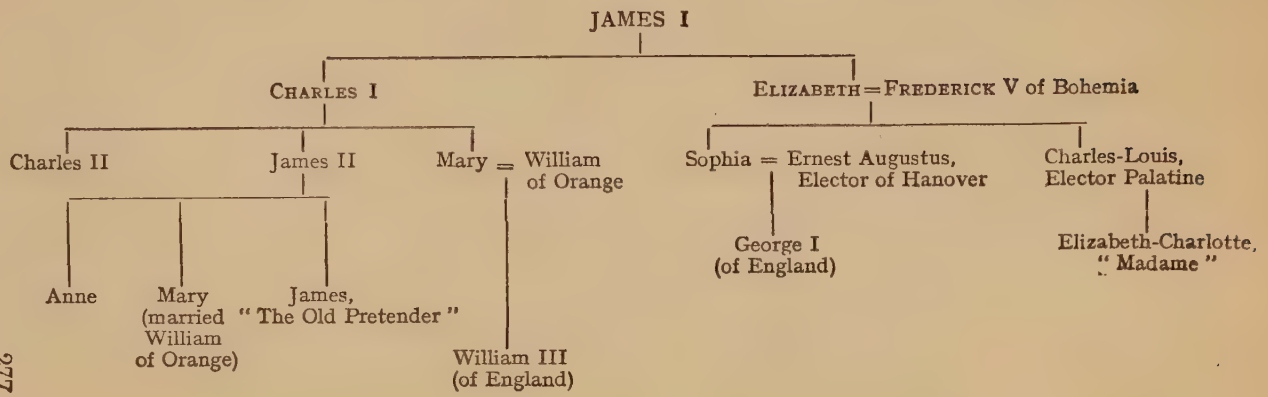
The fashion in France.

23rd December, 1708, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

Here are some new ballads which have come to me from I know not whom. They came by post. In one of the ditties they represent Monsieur d'O fleeing like Polichinello from the Marionette's theatre. Everything is a question of fashion in France, and nowadays it is the fashion to be frightened and run away and be defeated, just as it used to be the fashion to defeat enemies and put them to flight.

GENEALOGICAL TABLE, SHOWING THE RELATIONSHIP OF MADAME TO THE ROYAL HOUSE OF ENGLAND.



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